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THE
WANDERINGS
OF A
PEN AND PENCIL.

BY
F. P. PALMER AND A. CROWQUILL.



Remains of Southwell Palace.

LONDON:
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P R E F A C E.

IT was deemed requisite by the Publisher to accompany the pages with something by way of a Preface to the whole; but in truth the nature of the book is so readily understood by a general reader, and the plan of the narration is worked out with such entire simplicity, (the chapters throughout having a strong family likeness to each other,) that little presents itself to our conception, but the presentation of a mere formal Introduction to those who always take interest in compositions of a similar nature; that is, such as relate to stray antiquities, and the chequered events which cling to the path of pilgrims seeking the relics and legends of a remote and by-gone period. Many observations, items, and statements are woven in our text which may bear contradiction from the more learned of the brethren, or, at the worst, provoke critical vehemence and disparagement. We do not apologise, or intend to apologise, for such a condition of the mutual production. From the beginning of the story to the end we went onward as gossiping adventurers, and as cheerful health-seeking sight-seeing travellers. Something we accomplished for our own profit and intellectual gratification—something we did for a profit and good example to others. We never wrote “Pundit or “Moonshee” upon the wallet after our sociable initials, or gave wise or simple folks reason to believe we were any thing else than inquisitive, persevering wayfarers, who often went by lanes and intricate roads, when the Queen’s highway would have abbreviated the toil, and who were sometimes to be seen leaning over a mossy well, or a stale newspaper, and often brooding over green fonts, and crypts, of climbing stone, when it would have rendered more justice to the cookery of our tavern host for us to have been just as near to the soup kettle, or enveloped in the odorous vapour of the roasted capon, and its wholesome cottage accompaniments. We pray that no one may hunt us into our home of tranquillity, with the misconception that we have peculiar opinions about Ogham stones, coal, coins, or the singular profane carvings in country churches, and the like. We renounce theories on the broad principle; and we are so tolerant of new light, that we could endure to learn that no King Arthur ever existed, and that the Brutus of Geoffroy of

Monmouth was a bare and ludicrous figment. We ourselves disbelieve the legend of King Cole and the fiddlers, and have small faith in the humpback and early teeth of Richard of Gloucester. We believe there was once a time when the poor were more tenderly provided for than at the present period; but we shake our heads at Robin Hood and the prophecies of Nixon without any fear of being assassinated by the common people. We have aimed boldly at difficulties. We have *tried to please* ourselves, the Public, our readers, and the kind and loving strangers who ministered to our comfort and instruction upon the road. Many think we have said fierce words of certain institutions, and of some unrighteous practices and misappropriations. We plead an involuntary and impetuous hatred of injustice, which, we are sorry to say, after long experience, more frequently produces warmth and hue upon our own cheeks than such effect, in case of the parties accused. At all times it will be gratifying to amend our faults, by attention to the suggestions and corrections of persons better informed than ourselves. Inadvertently we may have blundered frequently. We repeat our recommendation of these "Wanderings," not as any token of our ability, but as a stimulus and humble example to men of full leisure and acknowledged capacity. Modestly and courteously, we present the book to the Public at large with its foil of imperfection, and trust it will be received with a disposition to make allowances for intention, for rapidity, hindrance, and eccentricity.

F. P. PALMER.

May, 1846.

CHAPTER I.


THE MEETING OF THE PEN AND PENCIL.

BENTLEY HALL, WHERE CHARLES II. WAS CONCEALED AFTER THE BATTLE OF WORCESTER. — POUCK HILL. — JAMES THE FIRST'S GIANT PORTER. — WILLENHALL — THE CONDITION OF ITS WORKING CLASSES.

WOLVERHAMPTON. — TURTON'S HALL. — WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGIATE CHURCH. — EARLY HISTORY. — THE MONUMENTS OF "THE LANES" OF BENTLEY. — ADMIRAL LEVESON. — CHARLES CLAUDIUS PHILLIPS. — BRITISH PILLAR. — THE "OLD" STAR AND GARTER OCCUPIED BY CHARLES I. — STORY OF MR. HENRY GOUGH. — WOLVERHAMPTON IN THE OLDEN TIME. — FEATURES OF THE COAL AND IRON TRACT OF STAFFORDSHIRE. — GEOLOGICAL WEALTH. — THE WREN'S NEST AND ROWLEY HILLS. — THE WHITE LION AT SEDGLEY, AND ITS HOSPITABLE HOST.

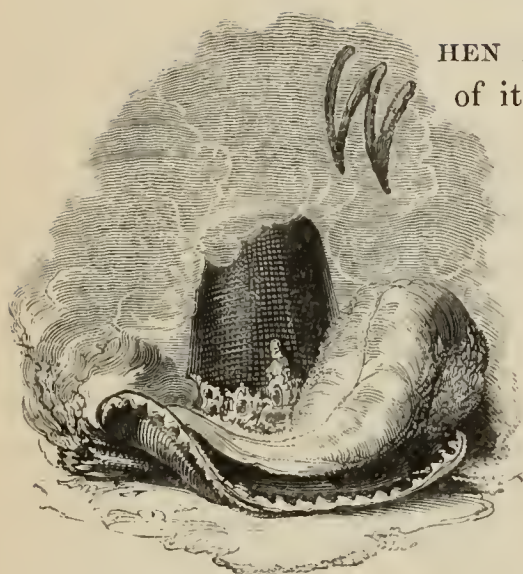
DUDLEY PRIORY — ITS EARLY HISTORY. — THE CASTLE AND CHAPEL. — THE PRIORS OF DUDLEY. — THE PEN AND PENCIL ENCASED FOR THE NIGHT. — A BILSTON SUNRISE. — A RETROSPECTIVE GLANCE. — THE BILETON BOY AND HIS PRETENDED BEWITCHMENT. — BILSTON DIALECT. — GOODY LANGSTON. — THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE PITS. — THE PIT GIRLS. — TETTENHAL. — PICTURESQUE SITUATION OF ITS CHURCH. — ANCIENT CHEST. — DANISH BATTLES. — THE APPROACH TO BOSCOBEL. — BEAUTIES OF THE COUNTRY. — CODSAL.





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CHAPTER I.



WHEN April was waning towards the completion of its verdant task, and the luxuriance and bridal beauty of the merry May could be discerned from every threshold in town and country; when the stifled artisan looked forth from his garret roost, with spectacled face upon the dazzling sunlit heaven, and the sick cottager blessed the song of birds near to his peaceful dwelling, and children leaped in ecstacy to see the quickly vested trees and the blossoms of the snowy orchards

around them; when in pasture, coppice, lane, and garden ground, it was light and music and perfume every where, we two, who had vowed an antiquarian tour upon the earliest succession of holidays, joined hands rapturously together, meeting from a far distance, and set forth in the early morning time, with staff and scrip, upon our appointed pilgrimage. Unencumbered with worldly provisions, we had less store of cares and of anticipations, and the song we carolled in unison as we left the dewy trysting was the earnest of the felicity attendant upon our pleasant journey. We were in search of antiquity; hermits' well; Saxon arch and Gothic aisle; of mansions embattled in the days of civil strife; of fields haunted by moonlit shadows of panoplied warriors; of good and glorious things chronicled in venerable times; all soon to be desolated by unsentimental rectors and whitewashing vestrymen, by holiday miscreants, curmudgeon proprietors, and that deluge of novelty and collateral reform which runs with the railway line, and converts convents into station-houses, retired villages into blank towns of tenements at eighteenpence per week, and the romantic nooks and corners of Britain, from their shy infancy and green lustihood, into market-places, mine-forges, and arenas for corn-law agitation. We are not of those who whine out peevishly to the world of "good lost

olden times!" and "good lost olden people!" Nothing of the kind, believe me! we have a consistent charity in our bowels (thank God for it!), and it "begins at home" as it ought to do—in England, our country, and in the present active, kindred generation. Still we have intense sympathies with the past, because with our boyhood we relinquished the idea that death was "a destruction." To us, the past, the present, and the future, circulate the blood of one divine heart, and we who are attuned to most irritable sympathy feel the pulse as it vibrated in the limbs of our ancestors as well as the warmth of the brother who ministers to the joy which we hold in our immediate existence. We know

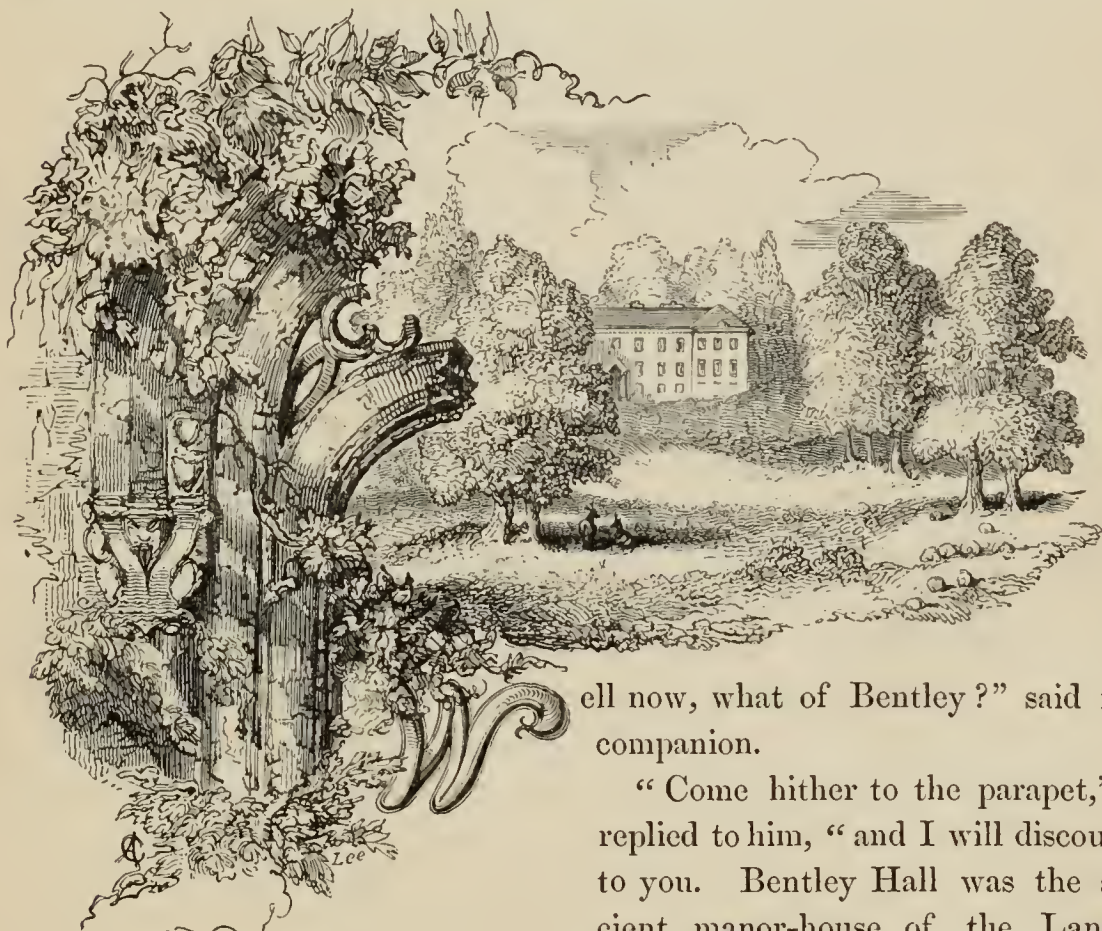
Nought must endure but mutability.—SHELLEY.

But with the goodly scholarship the "old book" hath delivered to us, we stand between the hours of change, and desire to note down some tokens of the person and apparel of the "elder time" out of very gratitude for its immortal instructions. We had progressed but half a mile upon the road, and were traversing with solemn pace the skirts of a moated boundary which had served as the defence to a ruined manorial dwelling near to the town of our residence, when he of the Pencil, my stalwart comrade, stimulated me gently in the ribs with his lengthy staff. "Where are we going to?" he said, "I am entirely at your direction, and you seem to be thrusting me forward into the 'Inferno' of the mining district, when I have been thinking at home of dells, and moorlands, and ruined cells, in lonesome dingle places. You go along as silently as a pedometer. You are sad, perhaps, at leaving domestic scenes, your blue-eyed infant, and your timid moiety?"

"Not so! not so!" I replied to him, "my early ancestors were veritable wanderers by profession—old English 'Palmers.' I can show you record for the certainty. I inherit the family deficiency of an organ of 'inhabitiveness'; feel here, it is a perfect hollow; my belief is that such a prominence is acquired; by nature we are all vagabonds. To settle down is to rest—motion is happiness; I am fond of this pilgrim life, and I am glad; if *now* silent it is because I am dreaming of scenes onward and before us in the distance. Observe that substantial square brick mansion, quoined with stone, and almost hidden by the brushwood and towering trees which surmount the charming upland—that is Bentley Hall, and it is the first place of notice in the line of our present wanderings."

"Staff to the ground then," said my companion, "and speedy foot, or the day will be spent in sluggish toil." In due time we halted in front of the porch, and sought an introduction to the tenant of the habitation. It so

occurred that this house had recently been undergoing thorough repairs, and upon the day of our arrival a new tenant entered upon possession. As we made an advance we received silent warning to beat up a retreat. Incongruous assemblages of parlour and kitchen furniture, hods of mortar, rusty gates, dislocated wainscotting, and similar unprovided and exiled sundries deterred our enquiries, and indeed it would have been indiscreet to have pursued the customary antiquarian impertinences under the unfavourable circumstances. "The Pencil" struck off a memorandum of the "Hall," which stands upon a goodly eminence, adorned with fine elm trees, a few fields from the highway. The lawn before the house is spacious, and you have thence a fine prospect of the surrounding country.



Bentley Hall.

ell now, what of Bentley?" said my companion.

"Come hither to the parapet," I replied to him, "and I will discourse to you. Bentley Hall was the ancient manor-house of the Lanes; and is memorable as having been the

residence of that firm royalist Colonel Lane, who, with his sister Jane, concealed Charles II. here, after the Fight of Worcester, and assisted him diligently and with good stratagem in effecting his escape from the disastrous kingdom. The manor is termed 'Bentley Hay,' and is situated four miles and a half east of Wolverhampton, to which it appertains. Beasts of a wilder nature were formerly captured by driving them into

the paled or hedged part of a wood or forest (as at this day elephants in India or the deer in North America). This then is the 'Hay,' or 'Haye' (French *haie* or *haye*). It was customary, moreover, for a stipulation to be made in the tenure of land, by which the tenant was bound 'to store a certain quantity of hay' there for his lord. Now we find that William the Norman granted this manor to one Drew 'by the service of keeping the hay.'

"Colonel Lane was descended from Adam de Lona, of Wolverhampton, whose grandson, Richard de la Lone de Hampton is recorded 9th Ed. II. 1315. The whole pedigree may be traced in Stebbing Shaw's 'History of Staffordshire.' The aforesaid Colonel Lane, who was instrumental in saving the monarch, was the son of Thomas Lane, Esq., who married the daughter of Sir Walter Bagot, of Blithfield. He died September, 1677, having received a pension at the Restoration. The family monuments are in 'Lane's Chancel,' Wolverhampton Collegiate Church, where there is a fine memorial of this faithful squire, surmounted by his heraldry, and adorned with other excellent sculpture.

"The ancient seat of Bentley has been sadly mutilated. The right wing of the present mansion is deficient. The stables to the right, sheltered by trees, and the summer-house in the garden to the left, were of the old structure. The hall of Charles the Second's time presented a front with many windows, adorned with stone-work in the prevailing style. In the centre was a projection of building, viz. the entrance porch and a turret or chamber, square, and of moderate relief; the wings projected boldly, and were surmounted by gables of ziz-zag outline. It had a high pitched roof, and the chimneys were clustered in the plain fashion subsequent to the domestic Gothic. Wide extent of outbuilding there would be—kennels, offices, and mews for well-trained hawks; for the picture the history offers to our contemplation is Charles riding from Bentley (disguised as a serving man), before pretty Mistress Jane Lane, whose features, we are told, 'were something like unto those of Queen Anna Boleyn:' Lord Wilmot ambles cautiously in the distance, and the lady bears upon her neat gauntlet a proud hawk, as if she, with the menial in her father's livery, had betaken themselves to the open air for a burst of pastime. You must look at them in this fashion in Vandergucht's engraving for the 8vo. edition of Clarendon. Mistress Jane had obtained a pass to visit her sister, Mrs. Norton, at Bristol, and under favour of this she arrived safe, with her anointed varlet, who soon afterwards, as the first instalment of wages due to him, received a fiery box upon the ears from the smutty fist of her kinsman's cook-maid. The tale is popular:

the substance of the story, as it may be found in ‘Bernardi’s Journal,’ is this:—After the King had arrived at Sir George Norton’s, he took his place with the servants in the kitchen, to perform the requisite duties. Some meat was in progress of roasting upon the ancient contrivance, and the cook desired him to wind up the jack; but he, disconcerted, fumbled, until the wheel ceased to turn round at all. Therewith, the sullen goddess of pots and pans struck him a cuff over the cheek, and called him ‘a black blockhead!’ asking ‘where he could have lived, that he knew not how to wind up a meat-jack?’* The ‘Stuart’ in livery had ever a kind affection and a submissive abandonment to the gentle sex; and with an unusual blush, he timidly replied, ‘he was but a poor tradesman’s son, and had not been long in his lady’s service.’ The festive board of Bentley Hall has been thumped by the red knuckles of the belted royalist many and many a time, when laughter and cheers responded to the witty remembrance of this hour of peril, and

Hey! for cavaliers! Ho! for cavaliers!

has been sung with bumpers from the black jack, and libations from the silver tankards of the departed race, when the gilded oak leaves were abundant in the panelled hall, and the memory of iron-faced Noll was groaned down by every voice and throat in the devoted household.

“Old Doctor Plot mentions several curious things connected with this place and the vicinity. Pouck Hill seems to have puzzled the worthy investigator. It is now surmounted by a triangular copse of wood, and is used as a preserve for game, upon the estate of Lord Lichfield, whose iron-works are adjoining. Within this inclosure is a scene of considerable geological interest, viz. two distinct masses of inclined basaltic columns, well defined, the columns for the most part bearing a gentle curve in the longitudinal direction. It has been an outbreak of igneous material, crystallised upon its ejection, and this alone will amply repay the scientific traveller who wanders hitherward upon his journey of mental improvement. When you have leisure, you can turn to the ancient history of this neighbourhood, and read of the ‘Cross-billed Crow,’ ‘The Illuminated Mud-holes,’ ‘The Imprisoned Toads,’ ‘The Singular Fungi,’ &c.; not forgetting to remember that Master Parsons, the gigantic porter of King James I., was born at West Bromwich, near, and that his great hand was carved upon the wainscotting of the former mansion at Bentley. It measured, says the narration, ‘eleven

* This is said to have occurred at Long Marston, and the blow was inflicted with the ladle. Part of the house remains, and the identical meat-jack.—*Correspondent.*

inches from the wrist to the end of the middle finger, and the palm was six inches in breadth.”

“Let us inquire,” said my comrade, at the adjoining grange, “we may yet learn that something of interest remains in the mutilated dwelling.”

The farmer was at home; he left the cattle at the manger, to wait upon our bidding. “Have you dwelt long in this farm?”

“A goodish bit,” he answered.

“You have frequently been over the Hall, and of course you can inform us whether there yet remains anything curious in the house relating to King Charlie, or old Colonel Lane?”

“I’ll tell you what,” said the bluff farmer, “you see that parapet wall!” (we had been resting upon it, about six yards from the kitchen door of the place in question): “since I lived here, I never was over that in my life! and I know no more of the place than I do of the inside of your own breeches pocket!”

“A droll case!” we said, and wished him a very good morning. The man had an excellent social visage, a free tongue, and a ready wit: the fault must have lain on the other side of the wall, for evidently there had been more hospitality at the trencher of the working man than with the side-board of the wealthier neighbour.

We descended the “Hay” to the turnpike road, and continued our walk towards Wolverhampton, travelling some way of the same with an aged labourer, who related other particulars, which increased our store of knowledge.

“All sorts of folk,” he said, “had got into the old place. Some time ago, one of the Ansons lived up there, and before him the Lanes. I dare say,” he continued, “you’ve heard talk of old Lane? Bless you! he was quite a sporting gentleman, and he took no end of pains to train chaps up to foot-racing, by which, now and then, he turned a trifle in the betting line. There were some man’s bones, or woman’s bones, found, one time, under the attic stairs at the Hall, and it made a bit of a stir about, for a while; because, you see, Lane’s racers were a rum set o’ devils, and the tale went as how he fed ’em on churchyard bones, ground down, and served to ’em with their morning’s porridge, to put wind into ’em; for he made nothing but a word of sending one off (for exercise) to fetch him a clean tobacco-pipe from Birmingham; one to take his wig to the Litchfield barber to be curled by dinner-time; and a third to cut him a turf for the lark from Cank (Cannock) Chase. There a’int his like in all the country now.”

The cleanly smock-frock departed at an angle of the road, and we passed

onward through the small town of Willenhal, which, by the way, contains several thousands of persons infamously employed in the manufacture of locks, keys, and bolts, chafing-dishes, gridirons, and curry-combs. We went hastily forward, as over a morass, quaking with the venomous life of reptiles, and breathing the groans of deformity struggling with the oppression which overwhelms it with hideous violence. Peruse (if you have the firmness to do so without a tear) the evidence of Richard Grainger, Esq., given upon the recent "Inquiry into the General and Social Condition of the Working People in the Manufacturing and Mining Districts." Birmingham, we know, is the Magog of hardware creatures; it escapes with negative commendation: other places receive the "few stripes" or the "many," according to the spirit of their uncongenial territory. But this Willenhal, a speck even in a gazetteer, which you drop upon as you would upon a plaguy viper's nest, or which intrudes upon your vision like a smut carried by the wind, maintains a shameless pre-eminence in the list of anathematised localities. Here, by the twinkling of slender tallow candles, the poor man toils, in the cool and lulling mockery of the midnight hour, from the early dawn of the summer day; and the frigid effrontery of creditable witnesses assures us, that with boys or children (as *we* should term them) the case of cruelty is more hideous; for these the file must growl and the hammer din, not for fifteen or sixteen hours, with due intervals of repose, but simply and awfully "as long as they can keep at it," which is the measure of their life, their support, and their destruction. Certainly there were lock-makers in the streets of Pompeii—gridiron-makers in Herculaneum: which was the Willenhal of ancient history? Are there no such engines of God's wrath in Staffordshire, as Vesuvius, or an earthquake? How interesting it would be, centuries hence, to dive down to a curry-comb maker's factory, through strata of compact cinder and incrusting lava, and to expose the relics of the former children of "most free Britannia;"—the skeleton hand grasping the wallet of silver and gold; the old and toothless scull, lying side by side with the gnarled spine and the deformed limbs of withered childhood.

"Now," said I to my companion, after a silent path of many speedy foot-falls, "we are in the ancient town of Wolverhampton, famous at the present date for its japan-work and its hardware, its dense population, and its excellent race-course. The quadrangular structure of dirty brick, with its heavy projecting wings, staring with mullions worn and eaten by the rainfall of many years, is Turton's Hall, formerly a residence of a family of that name, previously of the Leveson's, though now occupied as a manufactory. Notice

the wall which surrounds the enclosure, with the dull turrets over the waters of the stagnant moat at the hitherward side. The little birds which hop from bough to bough of the slender willow trees do not attempt to sing to you; they are hoarse as watchmen, and when they flutter their wings it is for grievance of the soot and the dust which is their usual envelope during their residence within ten miles of smoke-beshrouded Brunmagem."

"You told me of Lane's Chancel in the Old Collegiate Church," said the Pencil. "The sun is warm, and the streets are in a whirlwind of suffocating cloud. We share the luck of the birds you have described: let us shelter there, and as we proceed, speak to me of this second point of our travel, that our sympathy may increase as we address ourselves to the sanctuary which welcomes us to its shadowy porch, over the void and silent market-place."

"In the Saxon dominion, Oswy being engaged in a war with the Piets, the Mercian nobility threw off the Northumbrian yoke, and placing Wulfere, the second son of Penda, upon the throne, they recovered the entire kingdom of Mercia. Now this new king was addicted to the Druidical rites which had been practised in Staffordshire from time immemorial. St. Chad was then engaged upon his mission of grace and conversion in central England. It is probable that the pagan adversary erected a temple upon the hill of Hantune, where, without a doubt, there was a heathen temple from the earliest period. Subsequently to his death this structure was entitled Wulfere-han-tune, 'the town of Wulfere's divinity, the sun.' After his conversion to Christianity he made St. Chad Bishop of Litchfield. The temple then was transferred to the true worship, and this is the origin of the first Christian church at Wolverhampton. The church in after-times was made collegiate by the influence of a pious lady, named Wulfruna, widow of Athelm Duke of Northumberland, and a daughter (sister, some say) of King Ethelred, who endowed it with good lands at thirteen considerable places in the vicinity. The 'good lady Wulfruna' passed her days in pious seclusion, and left her name to posterity. Wulfruna's building, however, fell into decay soon after the Norman Conquest, having existed as a monastic institution until near the reign of King John, and some few years since (I have been told) that the foundations of that venerable place, walls, crypts, and groined passages, were to be inspected in the cellars and vaults of the houses near to the High Green; indeed, but a little while ago, in taking down some decayed building in the market-place, signs of a subterraneous communication between the old monastery and outlying edifices were discovered, which of course shocked the saintly advocates of orthodoxy and ascendancy with an eloquent alarm, giving them to appreciate the usual vul-

garities of ‘secret paths,’ ‘naughty monks,’ and ‘children of Babylon,’ with other pretty lispings of uncharity.”

There is much contention as to the date of the commencement of the present collegiate church. It is fair, from architectural judgment, to conclude that it was built after the beginning of the reign of Edward II., as the decorated English style is prevalent. It occupies a commanding situation upon the hill on which the original town was situated. The tower, the south transept, the clerestory, the font, Lane’s chancel, the oaken carvings, the pulpit, and Leveson’s statue, are most worthy of close observation. The plan of the structure itself is crucial, the tower arising over the intersection of the nave and transept. There are five arches to separate the nave from each of the side aisles, plainly moulded, and completed at the spring of the arches with crowned heads, and faces fully bearded; the columns are octagonal, with moulded capitals. The canopied stalls under the old rood-loft have been mutilated. There are no grave-stones or tablets in this place previous to the date 1575, with the exception of the slabs, from which the brasses have been forcibly removed.

The monuments of the Lanes of Bentley were the first objects of our inquiry; they lie in the southern transept. The first is an altar-tomb in excellent preservation, on which repose the effigies of a knight and dame, the former in plate armour, with an apron of mail. His uncovered head (with reverend outline) rests upon a cushion; dagger, gauntlets, &c., in usual array. The dame is habited in the costume of her period; a small dog reposes at her feet. Upon the lateral facing of the tomb are represented seven male and three female children, with two swaddlings, who died in infancy. Upon the west end of the tomb are three escutcheons:—
1. Trentham. 2. Lane impal: Trentham. 3. Lane. There is the following inscription in church text upon a fillet around the tomb:—

Here lieth the bodies of Thomas Lane, of Bentley, in the countie of Stafford, Esquier, and of Katharyn his wife, whiche Katharyn deceased in the year of our Lord God, 1582.

The monument adjoining is mural, and is mounted on a basement of several courses upon a mosaic platform, the lower front being richly ornamented with an exquisite sculpture of arms, armour, banners, &c.; on the dexter side, a trooper’s horse at full speed passes under an oak tree, surmounted by a kingly crown. The monument is crowned with a shield heraldic, supported by two field-pieces. Crest—a demi-horse rampant, bridled prop., supporting between the fore-hoofs an imperial crown or. (Lane.) This is the memorial of the king’s preserver, the Colonel John Lane previously mentioned, and

the inscription, which is in Latin, and of considerable wordiness, sets forth his eminence above all titles, his military talent, his devotion, valour, and exceeding fidelity, the honours and remembrances he received at the "Restoration," his death, and his renunciation of a tomb in Westminster Abbey even upon his death-bed. There are other tablets, other monumental inscriptions of interest, as relating to the families of the vicinity, but in nowise of embellishment in the part set down to us. The tall statue of Admiral Sir Richard Leveson, superbly gilt, by the celebrated Le Sueur, merits, alone, especial attention. The inscription sets forth his fame, and the damage which he inflicted upon the Dons at sea in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Near the south door is an inscription thus:—"In the year of our Lord 996, and in the reign of King Etheldred, Ulfrune or Wulfruna, widow to Athelme, Duke of Northampton, founded this church." In the same porch is the following absurd epitaph, which the local authorities appear to have esteemed as a very wreath from Parnassus:—

NEAR THIS PLACE LIES
CHARLES CLAUDIUS PHILLIPS,
WHOSE ABSOLUTE CONTEMPT OF RICHES
AND INIMITABLE PERFORMANCES UPON THE VIOLIN!
MADE HIM THE ADMIRATION OF ALL THAT KNEW HIM.
HE WAS BORN IN WALES,
MADE THE TOUR OF EUROPE,
AND, AFTER THE EXPERIENCE OF BOTH KINDS OF FORTUNE,
DIED IN 1732.

Exalted soul! thy various sounds could please
The love-sick virgin, and the gouty ease:
Could jarring crowds, like old Amphion, move
To beauteous order and harmonious love.
Here rest in peace till angels bid thee rise,
And join thy Saviour's *consort* in the skies!

When we know that this poor itinerant was oftentimes under the depression of poverty, and mental anxieties of every description, we can readily esteem the joyous feeling of the author of these bombastic lines, who knew him, and admired "his inimitable performances upon the violin," but who probably would have less admired one of "smaller contempt for riches," who would impudently have requested the loan of half-a-crown! Immediately as you leave this porch, you observe in the enclosure of the churchyard a remarkable obelisk standing up from a rude basement of uncemented stone.

"What have we here?" said my companion; and we proceeded to examine it with studious attention.

"What do you make of it?" said I.

“ This is no Christian pillar,” he replied ; “ and before the hymn of Saint Wulfruna was heard in the stillness of the evening, long years ago, in the

early monastery, this token of former worship arose on the exalted mound, the relic of British superstition ; since then, perhaps, surmounted by holier emblems.”

“ Indeed ! ” I answered to the speculation he had ventured upon. “ You are on the right side in your deep conjectures, for these rude ornaments sculptured upon the time-worn shaft are not the arches, the tracery, or the pinnacles of Christian art. Listen to me. When Wulfere ascended the Mercian throne, and erected his temple to his tutelar divinity upon this eminence, there were Britons existing in the lower grades of Saxon society, although in a condition of painful servitude. It was but a lifetime since their fathers had been vanquished by these warriors of Northern Germany.



British Pillar, Wolverhampton.

It was customary to exalt the figures of heroes and worthies upon shafts of stone or wood near to these religious sanctuaries. Now the Romanised Britons, not ignorant of the tools or methods of the stone-cutter, would probably be the labourers employed, and they would piously embody their own peculiar sentiments of Druid inculcation in the design. Cannock-Chase, the grand meeting-place of the central Druids, was within a short distance. The vicinity of Wolverhampton, at the present, abounds with barrows and ‘ lows,’ consecrated to the dim age long gone by with names of indubitable meaning. When the missionaries of the Cross brought light to ‘ those that sat in the darkness of the shadow of death,’ they discovered, by repeated

trial, that they had to deal with a nation bigoted to the observances and deeds of their forefathers; wisely, therefore, for immediate purposes, they compromised their zeal, and frequently permitted their own doctrine to be grafted upon the closely-shorn stem of earlier superstition. Thus their churches were built with the materials and upon the foundations of heathen fanes; the brooks and wells and bowers of foolish reverence were associated, as accompaniments to pious hermitages, or spots of purifying baptism; and even the sanctuaries of the past were revived; and the culprit who had fled from danger prostrate to the feet of the bearded priest of Odin accepted a refuge more securely within the established sanctuaries of the 'Law of Grace and Truth.' As to the almost imperceptible sculpture itself, we shall quote Mr. Parkes' pamphlet, which was evidently a transcript of some elder authority:—'On the site towards the north-west, near to the base, in the spandrils of a kind of arch, are the figures of a bird and beast looking back at each other; over which, divided by a narrow band, are figures like dragons, with four feet and long tails, in lozenges; above these, a band of Saxon leaves; and in lozenges, birds and roses; separated by a third band similar to the first are beasts or griffins, in lozenges; and over a fourth band are various grotesque carvings.' These, as you see, we can trace now, but very indistinctly. The dragon was an object of high veneration amongst the Britons. In the mythology of the primitive world it was universally a symbol of the Sun. The Druids possessed a magical banner, named Gound-dello, in which the figure of the red dragon was conspicuous. 'It would have been a splendid sight,' says a venerable antiquarian (Oliver), 'to see that awful banner floating in the breeze on the summit of the High Green of Wolverhampton (before the view was obstructed by masses of building), and surrounded by the priesthood, the chiefs, and the people, in all their variety of picturesque habiliments—their wild and ferocious countenances exhibiting the mixed expression of awe and veneration for the consecrated standard, and of determined bravery to defend it to the last extremity.' The same of the other figures described, to which ample reference could be given from early British history, and the testimony of most learned authors."

Having completed our survey and the accompanying sketch, we crossed the market-place towards the Star and Garter Inn, in Cock Street, and were refreshed in the shade of a peaceful apartment there. The modern inn has been erected of late years upon the site of the ancient "hostelrie." It is built in the half-timbered Gothic style, with bay windows, chequered walls, pointed-pinnacled gables, and an infinite good taste in the

other numerous details. The present landlord, too, Paul Law, is a person held in great esteem, and presides over his numerous company with surpassing generosity, wit, and pleasant dignity. Unfortunately we lost much intelligence by his absence from home at the period of our arrival. After we had quaffed our cool modicum "to the shades of the past and the worthies of the present," we rambled over the interior of the wide mansion. The public room beyond the great stairs is ornamented with a massive ceiling, in old English style, and the walls are covered with a profusion of paintings, mostly of the modern school. To our inquiries at the "bar" as to the permanence of the relics of a former dwelling upon the same site, we were answered kindly by the hostess, who, at the hands of a sprightly intelligent damsel, furnished us with an oil painting of "the Old Star and Garter," which is here presented to you.



The Old Star and Garter Inn, Wolverhampton.

In this house Charles I., soon after the battle of Hopton Heath, was entertained by the chief royalists of the neighbourhood; and hence he issued manifestoes, ordering in supplies, &c., from his liege lords and commons, for immediate and peculiar aid. Here also he appears to have held a levee of his adherents; for at the subsequent council much wonder was

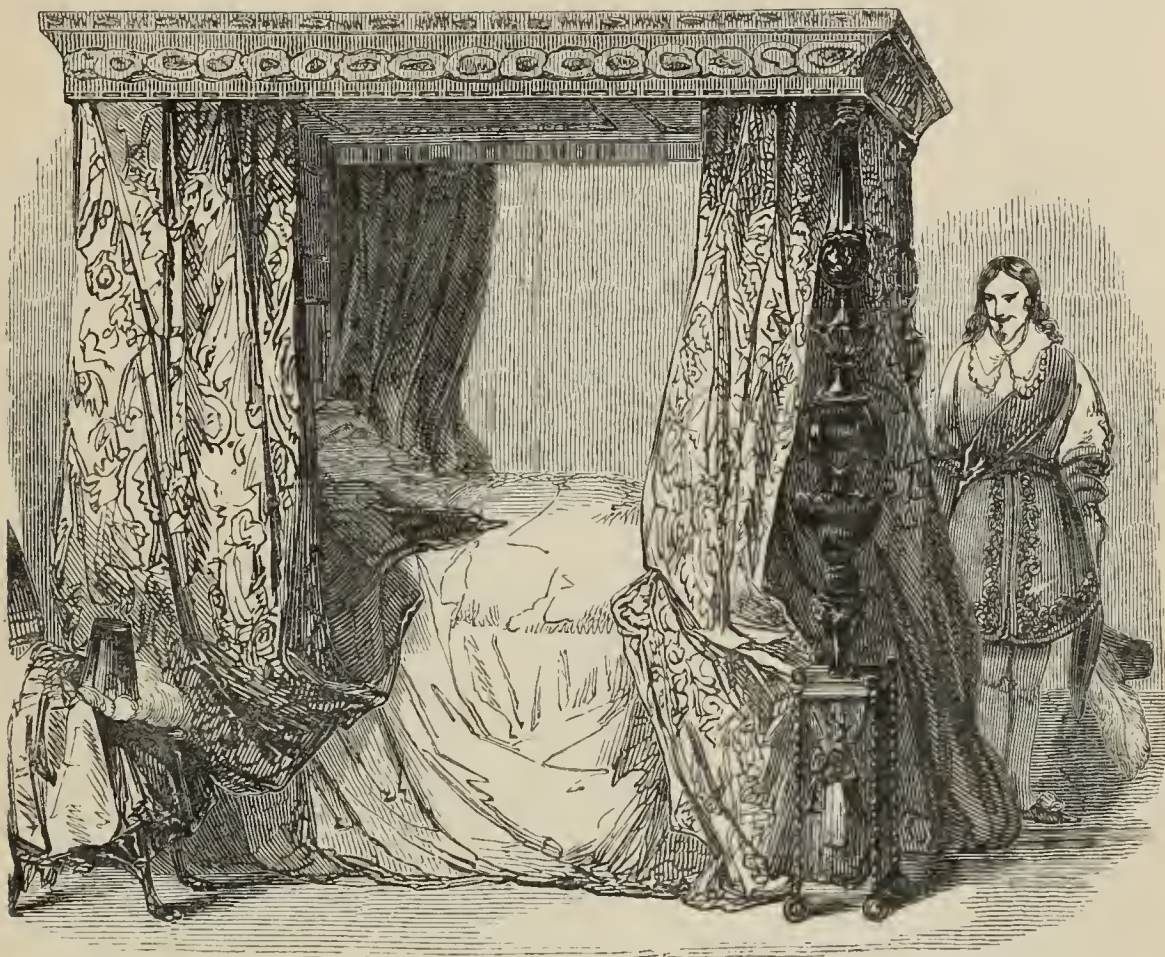
made that, when the inhabitants and great persons had so cheerfully attended to the subscription set on foot to aid the royal exigencies, Mr. Henry Gough, nephew of Madame St. Andrew, the King's hostess (who had ventured to accommodate their royal highnesses Charles Prince of Wales and James Duke of York), alone absented himself, and withheld a portion of his considerable wealth. In fact the King's commissioners had received a rude repulse to their earnest solicitations. When night approached (says the tradition), putting on his hat and cloak, Mr. Gough went secretly and solicited a private audience of his majesty. This appearing an extraordinary request, the dangerous nature of the times considered, the lord-in-waiting wished to know the object of the request, and offered to communicate it to the King. The old fellow remained obstinate, and he obtained a guarded interview to the royal presence. Throwing down a heavy purse of gold upon the table before the King, "May it please your majesty to accept *this*," said he; "it is all the cash I have by me at present, or I would have brought more." The gift was most acceptable, and an offer of knighthood was made to the eccentric old fellow: but he, having no other view than to serve his sovereign, declined, and the honour was afterwards conferred upon his grandson Henry, of Perry Hall, at the Restoration.* The sum contained in the purse is said to have been 1200*l*. The donor (or his sire) was considered so affluent that he was used to be followed by little impudent children in the streets, saying

"Here's old Justice Gough,
Who has money enough."

Tradition moreover insists, with matronly energy, that in the chamber of this dwelling, called the "king's room," the "royal martyr" slumbered at the same visitation in Staffordshire. The bed is of carved work, of considerable age, and the proprietor, by throwing the other arrangements of the apartment *en suite*, has converted that small space into an interesting historical cynosure. To heighten the intensity of association, you rest your eye by turn upon the following subjects, which adorn the several walls of the quiet room:—"Charles I. in his robes;" "Cromwell's family interceding for the life of Charles I.;" "The last moments of Charles I.;" "Charles and his Family;" and a head of Charles I., an oil painting of considerable merit. Who can guess the dream of that bewildered head seeking repose,

* Since this journey was noted down, the last of the "worthy Goughs" has been gathered to his fathers, and the estate has gone into the hands of the Calthorpe family. He died at a venerable age, and is still lamented by the tenantry.

when even the very whisper of caution at the threshold was more startling than the clangour of Naseby or the axe-fall upon the neck of pleading



King Charles's Bed.

Strafford? Sometimes, to unbroken spirits, bowed down merely beneath the temporary pressure of the ruder chances of the world, a revelation will come prophetic of future woe or felicity, and the truth of an event shall be pictured in its mysterious promise of the past: but to minds in continual warfare "to the hilts," with insolence, changeful fortune, and ferocious treachery, no such imagery can prevail; for the dream of that perturbed spirit is but the continuation of the diurnal sting of thought, aggravated by loneliness, obscurity of night, and the phantom (so like to conscience) which by God's appointment steals in with the twilight of our misty chamber, and begins the startling recital of our spiritual biography.

"Where else would you lead me to?" said he of the Pencil, as we turned from the threshold, and took our farewell of the goodly porch.

"The day wears along speedily," I answered; "the dull clouds circle round to the pale west, and a cool breeze and a deeper shade warn us of the advances of a lowering sunset. I intended to have rambled with you again

to the 'pillar' upon the eminence, and to have shown to you the huge Wrekin, basking like a whale upon the edge of the north-western sky, and to have traced the villages and places of interest which circle the prospect around; then I would have pictured you the old Wolverhampton in times of yore, its lofty central houses of lathe and beam, its skirting of hovels and meaner shelter, its surrounding woods and neighbouring streams,—for these have disappeared, and the ruddy furnace glows,—the deep coal-pit yawns, and mountains of glassy cinders rise where they have been, and are gone for aye. We could have seen the jaded watermen's horses toiling, as Plot describes, 'with their leathern budgets filled with the produce of the numerous wells and runlets of the verdant purlieus of the town;' and if we dreamed into dulness we could arouse to the annual procession of the sober 'Merchants of the Staple,' who from all parts of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Shropshire, Leicestershire, and Worcestershire attended at the annual fair with their wool and famous clothiery; and the minstrels, escorted by the train of armed men, who were wont to guard the town and property on those occasions, would ride by, cheering us with music and acclamation, imbued with the melody and sounds of ruder ways; but as you say to me 'the day wears on apace,' we will hence travel through Sedgley and Gornal to Dudley, where we will take down memoranda of the 'Cluniac Priory,' there and then *housel* in for the night."

"So far so good, but no more of it," said my companion; "let us proceed."

Dudley lies about six miles to the south-east of Wolverhampton; Sedgley is a village occupied by a nailing population, at the mid-distance; Gornal is about a mile onward from Sedgley, and is tenanted by artizans kindred to those in that district.

Travelling from Wolverhampton to Dudley, the external phase of the country deserves attention; and not so much from the singular "infernal" aspect arising from operations conducted upon the surface of the "coal fields," viz. the flashing, plumed fires of the chimneys of the furnace cupola, bursting from the obscurity of acres of densely-populated land, enveloped in wreathing smoke; the fitful gleam of bank and coal fires, reflected dismally from sullen canals, or the lurid waters of engine reservoirs; the sable human-shaped things, ascending, descending, and progressing in all directions, with the veritable concomitants of Dante's Hell; the snarling, shrieking, and groaning of wheel and chain work; the vixen-like howling of the "blast" upon the hearth of molten iron; the crashing of ore and subterraneous produce, and the hurling of shattered discs of scoriæ from the precipitous cinder mounds

to the splintery space beneath—not so much, I say, for these, does it deserve attention (for the mere panorama of a mining district is a subsequent thought), as for the geological essentials of the landscape. The most that could be offered to our friends would be the fruit matured by the laborious culture of celebrated geologists of the present day; and those who wish to retain outlines of the same region in South Staffordshire, and to comprehend the relation of the under-lands to the picturesque exterior, should consult the works of the gifted Murchison, who, like ourselves, has been the votary of the staff and scrip. He went from home, with solitary footsteps, and wisdom accompanied him returning from his labours.

When you have left Wolverhampton, half an hour's easy walk, the Beacon Hill, to your left, raises its finely-developed cone of verdant soil, broken here and there by quarries, at the "fall" of the strata. Winding round this, upon



Cavern at Dudley.

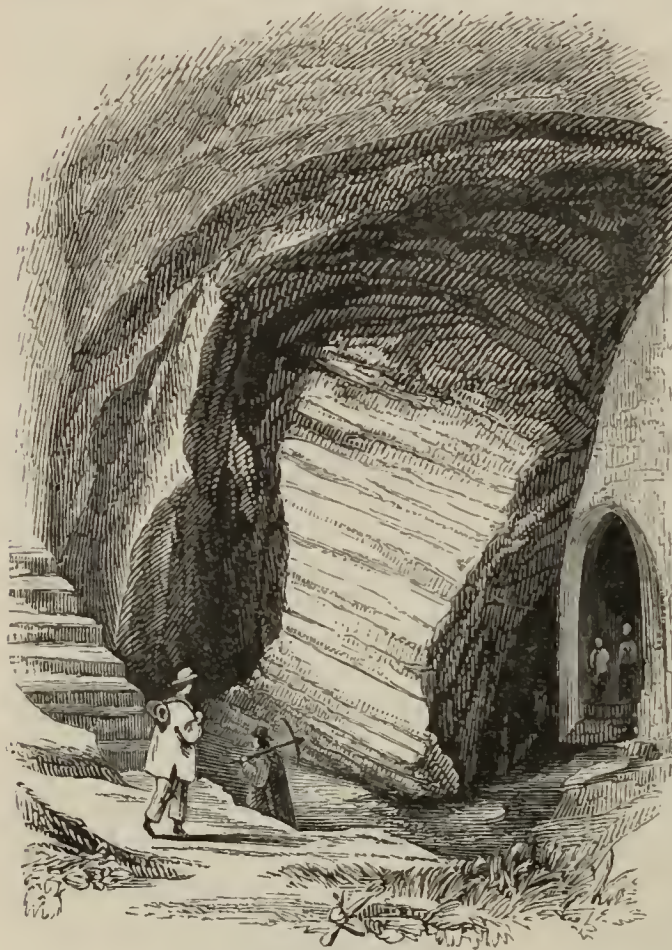
the southern roadway, you arrive at the uninteresting village of Sedgley, which lies towards the start of a magnificent terrace of limestone rock, ranging from the vicinity of the Beacon several miles in a southerly direction. This formation, technically speaking, is a stratification of limestone, kindred to "the Wenlock division of the Silurian system" of rock; similar strata, containing hosts of remarkable fossils, occur in Wales, in Shropshire, at Walsall, Dudley, and Sedgley in Staffordshire. It runs in a direction from north to north-east of the county. As you proceed, surveying the country to the left hand from the lofty highway (which runs through

Gornall and the skirts of Woodsetton*), you behold the sable physiognomy, many times multiplied, of the swarming coal-field, with its enshrouded

* A bed of huge fossil trees lies exposed at Woodsetton at the present time.

towns, its beggarly village outskirts, and its rear rank of stunted vegetations, contaminated fields, and "trees of charcoal."

As you advance still onward in the same direction, you contemplate with surprise and interest the perpendicular ochry ridge of the "Wren's Nest" hills, capped with a stunted furniture of bristling verdure; and, southward still, the bold peak or head of rock, which sustains the picturesque ruins of "Earl Dudo's Saxon foundation." The undulating verdure upon the mound, rising ridge above ridge of elm and maple, and gigantic hawthorn; the lone architecture of bygone centuries, bearing still a haughty dignity in misfortune, beneath the tender canopy of the meek blue sky, are altogether details of a picture, the beau-ideal of romantic beauty.



Cavern at Dudley.

These latter hills of the limestone series are formed of strata lifted almost to the vertical direction, and being quarried throughout, the natural and artificial spaces form caverns of appalling grandeur. The Castle Hill is perforated by a canal, which conveys the lime to wharfs in the vicinity. Beyond this, and tending to the south, is a lofty range, termed "Rowley"—an igneous ejection of volcanic origin, manifesting the produce in basaltic mass, and in the columnar form, as are the pillars of Staffa and the Giants' Causeway. Upon the same journey, take the view to your right hand, and you will rest with joyful vision and a full heart upon the deep vale, which creeps along with waving pro-

gress to your pilgrim path. It is shadowed by the umbrageous ascent of gradual eminences, repeated like sea-green billows into the far distance, with intermediate luxuries of space heightened by trim white cottages, rills veiled with rushes and cool water-weed, and by ranks of slender poplar, the whispering nymphs of the veiled solitude around them. By blending outlines and harmonious tints, retiring with fainting lustre to the grey

horizon, you repose the sight upon that fairy chink between earth and the sky, planted here with mountain forms in giant-like procession—the cumbersome Wrekin, the wide-footed Clee, the Abberley, the misty Malvern Hills, and Clent, made musical with the songs of Shenstone's lyre, and the plaintive lute of widowed Littleton. Nearer to DUDLEY are several abrupt mounds and cleft ridges of upland, crowned with the bright yellow verdure of the luxuriant juvenile year. These are igneous rocks, akin to the Rowley, to the Bentley "Pouck," and others. Thus we wandered, giving to the eye a festival of forms that were no delusion, conversing of many themes that rang the chimes of humanity and love in our two human souls,



Caverns at Dudley.

and brightening memory with visions of home, untarnished by a word or an emotion in the hour of absence, and its fanciful changes, weaning the heart from reason to sensuality and oblivion.

By the way (for we would not fail in gratitude to any man), commend us ever to Mr. George Jenkins, of the White Lion Inn at Sedgley, at whose superior shelter a gentleman will never be at a loss for an equal, or a poor man

for a considerate friend. His good name had been familiar to us for many years, and in the period of our peregrination we tested the wholesome tradition of his kindness and amiability. If any man knows how to give a hearty old English welcome, here is the professor of old English hospitality, and we will “cross sticks” with the biggest loon that ever staggered under sixteen stone weight of egotism, should he avow to the contrary. This is not mere flattery. Mr. J. is the idol of the working men in the village, and when times are “out of joint,” and discontent prevails, he plays a good part for their welfare; and whilst he seasons and refrigerates their democratic fervour with gratuitous draughts of unadulterated malt, he instils opinions of rational endurance and consideration, which serve them well in the crisis of their woes. He is an ingenious man too—witness the “steam-boat propeller” which he demonstrated to us; and his “horse-power” for working a malt mill (he is proprietor of a considerable ale and porter brewery), which, for simplicity and economy of space, is admirably contrived. Many years to the host and his happy family!

We had now just so much of the day left us as was sufficient for our visit to the priory in Dudley. When we arrived there after a hasty perambulation of the town, the west wind blew coolly—the thrush, abandoned to its wild vesper song, gave its full throat to the inspiration of the season—and the pale lingering light glimmered spectrally and with a cold and despairing look, through the void casements, the dim loop-holes, and ragged ramparts of the Castle aloft, in the shroud of the forest trees: ever and anon, with alternate echoes, the murdered melody of flute and horn in the woodland and a chorus



Dudley Priory and Castle.

of feeble voices declared that the garish revellers of the holiday were leaving the delightful sport, and the bewitching loveliness of the promenade over "the ravine," for the less romantic scenery, and the duller importunities of Brummagem life! Dudley Priory was founded in the reign of King Henry the Second, by Gervase Paganell, who had espoused "the Prince's party" in the contention of that period. Shortly afterwards his fortress was reduced (nearly) to its foundations, by an edict, and falling out of much repute, with struggling fortune he lived the remainder of his life, and when he died, his body was laid in the peaceful sanctuary he had constructed whilst living. He had an only daughter, his heiress, Hawise or Avisia, who was married to John de Somery. An application was made to Henry the Third, in the forty-sixth year of his reign, but he sternly forbade the re-erection of Dudley Castle. A manorial residence alone occupied the site of the former place of strength. Two years after this refusal, Roger de Somery (or Somers) obtained permission to build a castle, which edifice was in part formed of the materials of the insignificant manorial dwelling. He lived in command of wealth and influence, and at his death his remains reposed by the ashes of his grandfather, under the rude pavement of the priory chancel. It was the family burial-place of the Someries and of the Suttons in after years, and remained under their chief patronage. The chapel at the fortress was one of private devotion, and reserved as an oratory for the resident chieftain and the feudal "Menye."

John Baron de Dudley, who was one of the knights of the Garter towards the latter part of the reign of King Henry the Sixth, left a sum of money to maintain "a solemn burning of wax" over his sepulchre in the same burial-place. He himself had borne the "state banner" at the obsequies of Henry the Fifth, and in his own turn surrendered the vain things of life to the gaunt victor of the scythe. The bravery of the camp, the plesaunce of bowers of feasting, the courtliness of the regal hall, were to John of Dudley as they appear to all men in the last sad hour of strife—a straw in the balance, a faint vision, and an encumbering phantasy. The playthings of nobility—the costly helmet, the flourished shield, the heraldic surcoat, and the gilded pennon—became the trophies of "grinning death."

He left the homage of an obsequious tenantry and the vile shouts of sycophant greediness, for the narrow corner of the monastic pile—for the sad gleam of a few yellow funeral lights, and the wail of the "De Profundis" in the pitiful remembrance of the vesper hour. He trod in ghostliness, and his path was the uncertain and invisible doom—the guerdon of his virtue or of his crime. This institution was long under the patronage of the Someries

and the Suttons, and became a cell of Cluniac monks to Wenlock monastery in Shropshire, of the same order. "Everard the Prior" occurs in the translation of the Bull of Pope Lucius, 1190; and, A. D. 1300, Pope Boniface "granted an indulgence to all who should pray for rest for the soul of Roger de Somery," the illustrious benefactor. In the reign of King John the priory enjoyed an especial licence, whilst the kingdom was under the terrible interdict inflicted upon the subjects for the contumacy of the sovereign towards the Roman see, and for his obstinate perversity and sinful injustice. "*Liceat vobis clausis janicis, non pulsatis campanis, exclusis excommunicatis et interdictis, submissa voce divina officia celebrare.*" (They had permission to perform divine offices, with closed portals, silent bells, and the ejection of excommunicated and interdicted persons.) In the thirteenth year of Edward I., the prior of Dudley had leave to assort and unpark a heath in Kinfare Forest. John Webley was the last prior. In the thirty-second year of Henry VIII., this priory was given as a parcel of Wenlock to Sir John Dudley, and was confirmed by Queen Mary to Sir Edward Sutton and Lord Dudley. In Dugdale's "*Monasticon*" are the original words of the indulgence of Pope Boniface:—"Indulgentia orantibus pro anima Rogeri de Someri, militis, ejus corpus in prioratu de Duddely humanatum est;" also the commissioner's schedule—"Terræ et possessiones nuper cellæ de Dudley." The seal of this house, with a "release of land" to the church at Darlaston, was lately sold at a public auction of antiquarian property. We regret to state that those who term themselves, or are willing to be termed, "the antiquaries" of this interesting town, thought too grievously of a few miles' journey, or of the expenditure of a few pounds sterling, to secure the seal and the accompanying document. It was purchased by a gentleman from Lincolnshire.

The view of this ruined priory at an earlier date is to be found in the "*Monasticon.*" The chancel window was then a fine specimen, with tracery in five divisions, and looked down upon a pool of water, probably one of the many fish-ponds, or stews, which surrounded similar edifices. There was a lofty tower at the south entrance to the chapel, in which this window was situated. The tower was surmounted by a pleasant dome, and an ornamental embattled parapet moulding reclined towards the base of the dome at the summit of the building. Adjoining to this was a domestic pile, with a low gabled roof, in which were several projecting windows; and over an arched doorway entering these premises, or by the side of it (if I remember correctly), was a canopied niche, containing the figure of the Virgin. This portion of the structure was that which probably contained the kitchens, the store-rooms,



Gate, Dudley Priory.

the infirmary, parlour, &c. The chimneys were of the spirally-twisted form, and lofty. The porch appears as at the present time. Of this and of the chapel the more perfect ruins remain. The former is a quadrangular building, presenting in front a low arch of sandstone, much worn, and retiring with mouldings of several degrees. Above this is the void space of a lofty window casement: the sides of the quadrangle contain high lancet-shaped windows, but the walls are so overwhelmed with the luxuriant ivy, that the light, even in the rich summer time, can scarcely fall into the grassy hall between the twinkling leaves. This probably was the reception-hall, with a chapter-room, or prior's apartment, in the second story. Upon the floor, buried in the rank grass and devouring weeds, are several stone coffins, unearthed from the vicinity. There is also a monumental slab, which bears the effigy of a priest, in the sacerdotal costume, and seems to have lain beneath an arch in some church or chapel. I have since learned that this figure was not found at the priory, but in the north wall of the old parish church (St. Thomas), when taken down to build the present church; and it was Mr. Downing (Lord Ward's agent) who removed it to the present situation. We traced the raised foundations of the connecting building, and found some beautiful fan-work in the roof of niches still remaining affixed to the eastern walls and elsewhere; we followed also the line of destruction extending

into the neighbouring plantation. The marshy ground before the principal entrance was once a considerable pool. This ruin, now standing shrouded by the foliage of beautiful trees in the lonesome part of a private ground, immediately adjoining to the Castle Hill, is seldom visited. Many spend their merry days at the ruins above, who never think of the delightful spot beneath; and twenty or thirty years ago, profanation was busied here, for a tribe of glass-grinders, &c. were set to work within the ruins of houses in part constructed from demolished apartments, and if any traces of the



Dudley Priory Gateway.

illustrious dead had remained until their Gothic invasion, they were soon crushed, and scattered, and utterly destroyed by their ruthless endeavours to get rid of them "at any rate." Some armorial cuttings upon stone are preserved, or rather stultified, by insertion into the stable-walls of the adjoining "offices." One pitiful glance at the ivied outpost of ancient seclusion — one view of admiration to the rugged pile of Dudley, frowning in the twilight from its woodland eyrie — another look upon night, stealing upon the sense and form of nature around, and then to refuge and repose, for darkness came swiftly down, and

wearied limbs craved rest, after the "passage" of the busy day. A few hours afterwards, and we were quartered in the antiquarian snuggerly of our beloved kinsman, Doctor C. at Bilston, and were surrounded by his volumes of logic, poesy, quaint chronicles, and reverend "bokys" of all kinds, with fossils, electrotypes, and local curiosities innumerable.

The kindly board was prepared for our reception. The fire (think of the profligate conflagration of a Bilston coal fire if you dare!) blazed upon the cleanly hearth; fatigue no longer existed; the staves reposed with the poisoned weapons of Madagascar; the wallets, one upon either side, bolstered up the gaunt cheek-bones of a tusky walrus; from a tome of Hollinshed, in

the corner cupboard, we received our comfortable slippers; and from Fabyan and Doctor Stukely we accepted pipes and glittering meerschaums. Then the memoranda of the day's happy pilgrimage went round, when the viands had disappeared and the table was swept clear of the few remains; and by way of a joyful finale, we filled the wassail bowl, and chanted ballads of simpler times. To the midnight thus; and at that decent hour, with dreams already skirting our imaginative sensorium, the "Pen and the Pencil" betook themselves to their retreats, and heartily rejoiced in the welcome retirement.

In the morning, aroused from slumber by the last wild shrieks of murdered swine, and the hungry clamour of their surviving brethren (stored in an adjoining fold of pauper tenements), we made the vigorous determination to emulate the proceedings of the yesterday, and vainly we wished, in the foolishness of our uninstructed thought, that "the sun would rise," and illuminate the heavens with accustomed glow. All the while it was several degrees upon its ascending track, for we had forgotten that we were at Bilston, in the core of the mining district, where we lay puzzling into profounder mysteries, calculating to admire varying clouds, and the roseate auroras of a purer atmosphere. At last, by experience of its locality, in connection with the wisdom of the timepiece, we discerned it, in the skirts of a mournful mist, with a dull and lack-lustre physiognomy, much like a shilling or a crown-piece of base coin nailed to a cobbler's floor, or the features of a naughty youth, whose midnight course had been over-profligate, and who had rested for several hours in the stillness of the black-hole. Something like this we imagined to be the Phœbus of Bilston—changed, indeed, from the chiefest star of Milton's poesy, shooting

Parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
Discovering in wide landscape all the East
Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains.

So soon as we had dismissed the kindly refreshments of the breakfast table, and had chatted a full hour away over the patriarchal tomes and volumes eloquent of worth, and had caught a scene of the past and an inspiration of romance from the portfolio of ancient etchings, the truths of Della Bella, and the strutting world of the inimitable Callot, we left our host to pursue his professional toil, and we again resumed the scrip and the staff, and resumed the line of travel from his threshold. There is not any thing worthy of notice in Bilston which can be gathered to the leaves of our retrospective gleaning. Some few half-timbered houses remain to show where the granges and halls of country people stood but sixty years ago, when smoke and flame and excavation were limited to the vicinity. Three or four ruins of humanity,

queer garmented old tykes, who seem to have escaped from the canvass of Ostade, creep out, on sultry days, to lay their crutches together and "to talk over things" to some greener auditor, who hears with doubting, that so lately there were running waters of rural companionship across the main street, beautiful orchards in the pit fields, snipe for Sunday sportsmen, and "four squires," gentlemen who resided in those gabled and timber mansions, but who vanished like woodcocks when the colliers arrived.

In Wilson's "Life and History of James the First of England" there is a remarkable long story concerning the impostures of the "Bilston boy," famous at that period as one singularly possessed by a demon. He had accused a decrepit dame of the mischief, and she was condemned as a witch. Bishop Morton, however, after the trial at the county assizes, took the matter in hand, and by his shrewd conduct and close practices soon proved the cheat, which was confirmed by the confession of the juggling youth. The narration is also to be found in Plot, and in briefer form elsewhere in local histories; but this account by Wilson is worth perusal as a notable specimen of the sickly appetite for the awful and inhuman (as regards the youth and the poor old grandmother) at that period.

The dialect of the lower order here has frequently been noticed, as well as the peculiar countenance of the "real Bilston folk." We noticed ourselves (upon the excursion) the following:—"Thee shatn't," for "you sh'a'n't;" "thee cost'na," for "you can't;" "thee host aff, surry, or oil mosh thoi yed fur thee," for "take yourself away, sirrah, or I'll crush your head;" "wecar bist thee?" for "where are you?" "in a cazulty wee loik," for "by chance;" with "thee bist, thee shonna," "you are; you sha'n't." A young woman turned round to address a small child crying after her upon the threshold of the hovel as she went off towards the mine, "Ah, be saized, yung'un, if thee dos'n't



A Bilston Chap.

knoo' moy bock as well as thee knoo-ast moy fee-as." Some of the better apparelled, who affect a superior style, use words which they please to term "dicksunairy words," such as "easement, convinciated, abstimonious, timothy" (for timid). One female in conversation with a crony at the "truck shop" door, spoke of "Sal Johnson's aspirating her mon's mind soo-'a, and 'maciating his temper," and "I never seed a sentiment o' nothin' bod till it took Tum all at once't" (sentiment here used for symptom), speaking of indisposition.

"What a primitive old creature," said my companion, as an octogenarian female of dwarfish stature, her face (like a shrivelled apple under the exhausted air-pump) smothered with the frill of a clean mob cap, and shaded by the brim of a primeval milking bonnet, crossed the highway towards an humble cottage.

"She did not recognise me," said I, "or we should have had a 'yarn' which would only have been spun out with the declining day. It is the noted Goody Langston, who by hard work with her deceased husband at the coke hearth, with the aid of a small legacy, retired into yonder cottage, with a memory and tongue unruined by lengthening years, and with a comfortable 800*l.* in 'the safest bank she knowd.' My friend the doctor once called upon her; she was in her chamber upstairs, groaning piteously beneath the bedclothes. 'I conna live, never in no ways; noo, I conna; and it's no use a' talking. Oh lurd, what sha'n I do, what sha'n I do?'

"'Hollo, dame!' said the visitor, who had entered unperceived, 'what's all this about? come, none of this sad piece of work; cheer up, and we'll know what's the ailment, and see if we can afford relief.'

"'Oh, what shol I do! what shol I do! here I be, taen bod, and conna see to nothin', and nobody in the world to come nigh me; and I ha'na' brew'd, Lord! I ha'na' brew'd, and I got never a sup o' drink in the house' (the old lady was celebrated for an excellent glass of home-brewed).

"'Well, you'll soon be better, and then you can brew, but don't you harass yourself about it so grievously now; what occasion for it?'

"'Oh think o' this now — wo would come to moy funeril, and never a sup o' merry-go-down in the house; wo would?'

"Some time since she made her will, and I was present; she was then apparently near to death; the scene was in the same apartment. She was arranging her funeral in presence of ourselves, the clergyman, and the attorney. The debate was as to the mourning draperies; at last she resolved, and rising from the pillow, with much energy she exclaimed, 'Last wik I seed a funeril goo down street, and the chaps had hat bonds, and scarves, and

I thote to my'sen as they'd a very pritty look wi' em; and so I 'n ha the see-am, and set 'em down.'”

For three miles onward as we trudged along, we had the mining country, the wafted fires, the bulging smoke, the cinder hills, the mechanism, and the smutty fronted operatives in company upon either side of the road; and yet, says ancient tradition and record, here formerly were forests of oak, labyrinthine swine pastures, with green turf lawns intermingled—the sporting places of the nimble deer; and there were, moreover, abundant rivulets, marshy hollows, where the nodding willow sheds its tufted bloom for the service of the church at many a stately Palm Sunday. Science has desolated the feudal estate, and gone deep down to furnish bread and cheese for the increasing population. You miss the Tartar faces of the quondam bank girls, “the pit Sals” of former time, who emptied the skips at the openings of the shaft, and performed other masculine feats of strength. The legislature has ordained that none such above a certain age pursue this calling, and the older girls, now unfitted for domestic service, beg from door to door in scarce periods.



From Life at Bilston.

CHAPTER II.

BOSCOBEL HOUSE. — CURIOUS CHIMNEY-PIECE. — CHARLES'S HIDING PLACES.—HIS WANDERINGS.—THE EARL OF DERBY TAKEN PRISONER. — BOSCOBEL WOOD.

THE JOURNEY TO MOSELY COURT. — SOJOURN THERE. — MOSELY COURT SEARCHED BY THE ROUNDHEADS.— THE KING'S DEPARTURE FOR RRISTOL. — THE MANSION OF THE WHITE LADIES. — THE TOMBS IN THE ADJOINING CHURCH.

THE CONVENT OF THE BLACK LADIES, AT BREWOOD. — OPPRESSIVE ENACTMENTS AGAINST THE ROMAN CATHOLICS. — THE CONVENT CHAPEL. — THE LONELY BENEDICTINES. — THEIR HUMBLE COURSE OF LIVING. — THEIR DISMEMBERMENT.

BREWOOD. — CHILLINGTON HALL. — A LEGEND. — LONG BIRCH. — ANOTHER OF CHARLES'S CHAMBERS.



CHAPTER II.



“WHAT is our route to-day?”

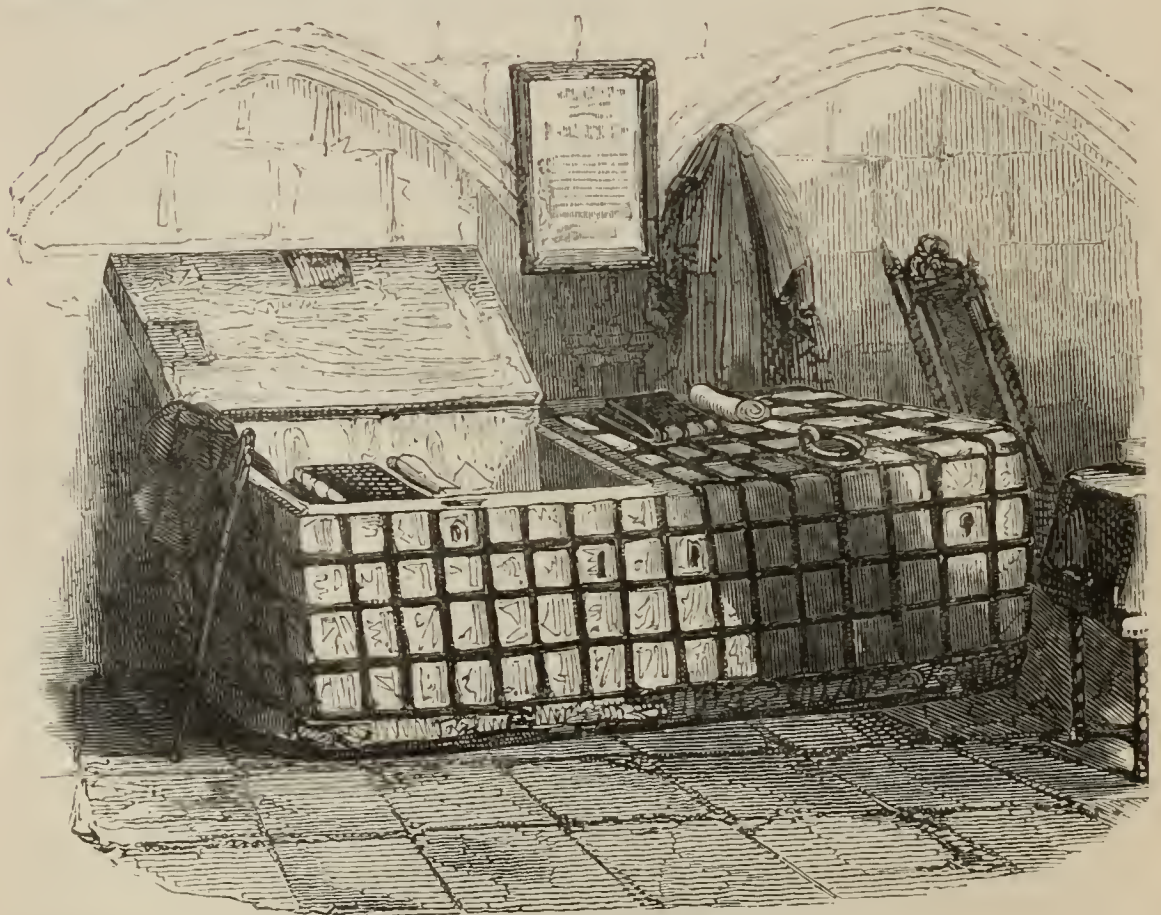
“We will make for Boscobel,” I replied, “and we will endeavour to find the old convent of the Black Ladies, which has been recommended to me as a scene of much interesting contemplation. By nightfall we shall have tripped some twenty miles or more.”

To this task we addressed ourselves, and with a less Stygian atmosphere, a brighter sun, and an improving scenery, we commenced the other day of antiquarian pilgrimage. Soon we arrived at Tettenhal, the “Theoton hall,” or pagan hall of remote history. Thus sayeth Camden—“Wulfrunes Hampton a Wulfruna pientissima fœmina quæ oppidum Hampton prius dictum monasterio auxit, unde pro Wulfrunes-Hampton corrupte Wolverhampton dicitur;” then, “Theoton Hall, id est, si interpreteris, gentium sive paganorum ædes, hodie Tetnall—Danico cruore MCCCCXI ab Edwardo Seniore intinctum.”

The road here passing onward to Salop cleaves the chine of an immense sand-rock, so that the village is bounded by the terraced road above, to the left by the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal on the hitherward side, and by the hill of sand upon the off boundary. The village green, planted with ranks of noble elm trees, lies down deep in verdant scoop from the highway towards the right hand, skirting which, in the same direction, are the pleasant houses of Tettenhal, with their plentiful accompaniment of garden ground, their secluded lanes in the rear, and the venerable church, situated in a solemn churchyard, planted with yew trees of centuries gone by, through whose fan-like boughs, simple whitewashed dwellings of the poor are seen, resting beneath the sleeping verdure and the rugged red brow of the excavated hill. It is one of the prettiest places conceivable in this part of Staffordshire, and is daily more intruded upon by clumsy proprietors of scraps of ground, by imported shopkeepers, and by those huge architectural

affectations, termed "country-houses," in which the hardware gentility of Wolverhampton carries on its evening and Sabbath masquerade, at the convenient distance of a mile and three quarters from the locks, nails, and frying-pans of the productive emporium.

The schoolmaster of the public school (clerk also) conducted us to the church, and we prefer the society of such a person to the purblind sexton, who in general "knows nothing more about nothing than what you see there," and, into the bargain, supplies your appetite with a few clumsy lies administered for the occasion. The interior of the church has been restored in very good taste. The chancel remains in tolerable condition. The east window of five lofty arches, undivided by transoms, is an object of much beauty; the upright shafts of division are surmounted by plain round capitals, and these terminate in trefoils with their fellow shafts. There are some grotesque carvings upon the falling seats of a richly ornamented oaken pew near to the communion, and some interesting monuments to members of the Wrottesley family. In the vestry lies, against the southern wall (which contains Gothic specimens of stone work), an unique chest, fourteen feet in length, about one yard in breadth, and covered by a lid, secured formerly with



Ancient Coffer in Tettenhal Church.

numerous rude locks and other fastenings. The whole is girded with iron bands, as the sketch will demonstrate to the curious. The cover is raised by a lever, and within is preserved a litter of vagabond papers, &c. This coffer is excavated from the solid oak tree, as is plain from an inspection of the central partition, cut out of the log, which shows the heart of the tree with its core and the concentric circles. It is an amazingly fine antique, and we cannot name its rival.

The Danes, who were defeated by Edward the Elder, lay in encampment, previously to this conflict, towards Wrottesley Park. They were vain-glorious of their strength, and were shamefully defeated. The fiercest of the fight was at Tettenhal; the retreat and consequent slaughter was towards Wedgefield, in which vicinity several "lowes" still remain. The "great feast of rejoicings" was held by the Saxons at Willenhal ("Win-Halla," the hall of victory). Eowills and Halfden, two kings, Ohtea and Scurfer, two of their earls, nine noblemen, and a great host besides, fell on the part of the "standard of the raven." Thus far *one* authority.

It is more frequently conjectured that the fight at Wedgefield was a separate conflict, and that the battle between Tettenhal and the Wergs (which was "so very terrible that it could not fully be described by the most exquisite pen") occurred at another period. However, hear the Saxon chronicle, the date of whose remembrance is A. D. 910, the chronological item of the Wedgefield antiquaries, and which appears to assemble the two dates in unity of circumstance and time:—On þýrum 7eþe Enġle ý Ðene 7eþuht on æt Teotanheale ý Enġle 7iġe namon. ("This year (viiij. August) the Angles and the Danes fought at Tootenhal; the Angles had the victory.")

In the survey of the church property, at the Conqueror's examination, we find—"In Totenhall there is one hide, the land is two carucates and a half, and there are three ploughs there, with a villain and three borders" (that is, a landlord, a farmer, and two cottage labourers). The carucate and hide are conceived to have been the Norman and Saxon terms for the same thing, viz. a space of about a 100 acres. "This land (says the Dom. Boc.) does not belong to the town of Hantone, but was the gift of the king to the church of that town."

Taking leave of this picturesque stage of our rambling tour, we inquired the road to Boscobel, and learned that the way to the secluded farm lay through CODSAL, a village distant five miles north-west from Wolverhampton. The road thither was solitary—a rural track for millers' steeds, for lumbering gigs, and the vehicles of agricultural employment. We had ample leisure as

we moved to welcome fondly the fair things of nature, and the bright creations of the verdant season, and to take unto our open hearts a thought of every thing, from the tiny guggling waterfall of the guttered stream to the lofty sky above, pure and blue as the tinge upon the concave of an ocean pearl. The barren heath became fruitful of tints and vagrant odours, and pleasing to us was the nodding, fidgety promenade of the shy lapwing, circling with stealthy walk and crest erect the broken clods upturned towards the turf of the weedy headlands. All the flowers and wild shoots, which are so commonplace, hereafter become as jewels in the surprise of the bursting spring; and names which, as the sun ascends, become vulgar, and befitting only the pages of the almanack, are then doubly dear after the wilderness of the wintry vacuity, and that first joy is worth the whole year beside. Ask your own children if we are in the wrong to utter this with such confidence. The drooping violets and the wild strawberry flowers adorned the feet of the sloping hedgerows, now throwing for the first time the shadow of their closer verdure upon the thirsty ground below, every free spray and tendril wafted to and fro by the light wind, marking its frisky movement upon the darkened soil.

Nothing is so gay as the light, sparkling, yellow green of the first verdure upon the hawthorn, the poplar, and the fluttering lime tree; and when still deep waters, clear as the dew in the palm of a gipsy girl, reflect the forms and the very tints of all such lovely things around, who would not be an idler, to roam, with nervous susceptibility of colours, sounds, and shapes of nature, in the area of unfettered life, and to quaff an intoxicating draught of health, forbidden by the sombre waste book, journal, and ledger—the triumvirate of the dusty counting-house?

Winter, by the way, has been set down as the emblem of decay and death. Old moralities dwell upon this frozen analogy. Did you ever observe the warm hues of the soil in the winter time—the brown, the yellow, and the ruddier mould harmonising with unshrouded habitations of similar hue, and serving as a cheerful set-off to the naked stems, the net-work of the blackened trellis, and the poverty of vegetation? Are there not beauties in every season? Winter is the emblem of trial, of that salutary deprivation preceded by summer felicities, succeeded by vernal expectations of change and *other* felicities. He who associates winter and death would despond over a broken tea-pot, and sink into utter despair after the contemplation of an old shoe!

Soon after noon we passed through Codsal, formerly celebrated for its sulphurous spring and the perpetual throng of miserable lepers, invited by

fame to the fountain at the "Hollow Tree;" and after a toilsome march through the deep dust and sand of an unfrequented lane for a mile or more, we arrived at the ascent of a painful hill to the gardens and outbuildings of



Boscobel House.

memorable Boscobel! We introduced ourselves to the housekeeper, who at present has sole charge of the mansion, and who did good service at our elbow, by declaring her wisdom in an unpretending and courteous mood. The sketch is of the west front, looking towards the Salop boundary. To this side of the dwelling (a half-timbered and plastered edifice) is an arrangement of garden, laid out in flower-beds of

scrupulous measurement and commendable taste; and between the parterre and the base of the building is a walk paved with quartz pebbles, which in a literary manner set forth the date of King Charles the Second's arrival at the place of refuge. To your right also, perched upon an artificial mound, is a summer-house, and probably as it existed upon the king's arrival. As there is but little remarkable in the external view, which is quite of the third-rate order of manorial architecture, we followed our conductress to the apartments of the interior (those reserved for the inspection of visitors), the bulk of the farm being in the hands of Mr. Green-smith, a worthy yeoman, occupying the eastward pile. The first room we were ushered into was a square parlour (to the right of the western entrance), panelled after the manner of the latter period, and furnished otherwise in modern fashion. The chimney-piece is of Derbyshire black marble, laid into panelling of more elaborate work; and the marble, besides other tracings, is adorned with three subjects in compartments, one in the centre upon either side, and the designs, I believe, are copied from original drawings in the Bodleian Library. The centre one is the oft-repeated marvel* of "the king in the royal oak, his pursuers near to him,"—the King a wonderful deal *too*

* The troops never passed under this tree whilst the king remained in shelter there. An owl flew out of the tree (say the old grannies), and the rebel captain exclaimed, "The owl loveth not company, and where he hath been no one else may be," and he rode off with his men to the king's great joy. This is a valuable bit of country "hum-fum."

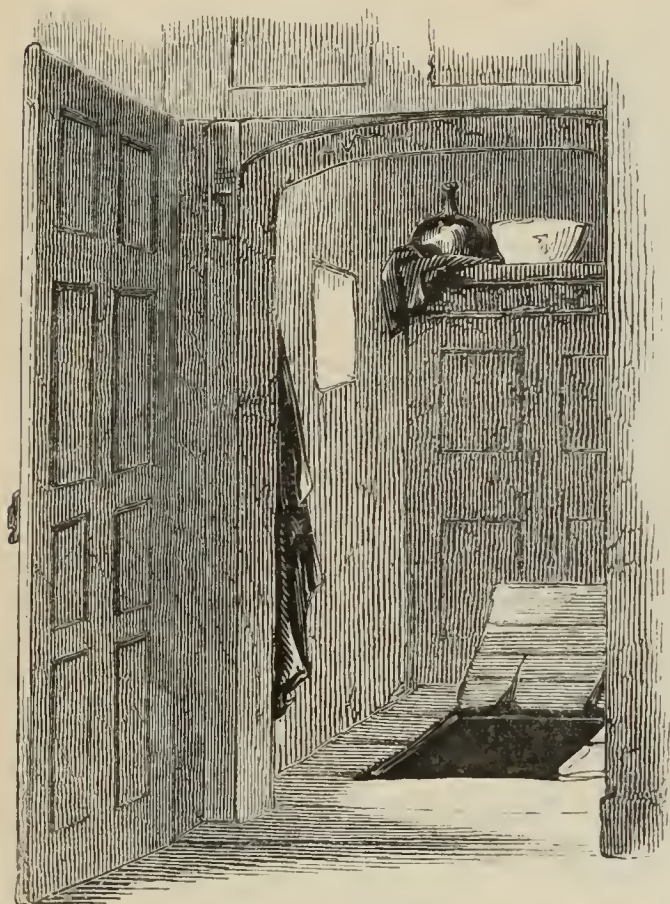
conspicuous, and the pursuers as jaunty as members of the Melton Mowbray Hunt. One group represents the King, mounted upon horseback, in his mean disguise, and escorted by the Penderells and by Giffard's servant, Yates.



Charles in the Oak — a Compartment of the Chimney-piece in Boscobel House.

There is a vast drollery in this group; you are so reminded of the quaint, clumsy personages in "Bunyan's Progress;" in fact, a better burlesque never could be seen, of the rollicking Charles reduced to pitiful condition, and abandoned, or rather confided, to the keeping of these lowly earnest men. The burly loon in front of the king's horse is intended for Richard Penderell, the chief actor, and the letters R. P. are engraven upon his belt, garnished for the nonce with a brace of pistols, or something weapon-like, which we may have mistaken for fire-arms. The King and Penderell arriving at Boscobel in the night-time is the subject of the third compartment. An ornamental border encompasses each design; a crown with the sword and olive is the surmount; and Discord, in curious costume, and Puritanism, as lack-a-daisical as you please, form supporters to the circular scroll-work. The one tramples upon the lion, the other upon the lamb. In a closet in the southern angle of the room there is the Latin inscription formerly placed

upon the veritable oak, or at least upon the enclosure.* It is sculptured upon brass.



King Charles's Hiding place.

Ascending the flight of stairs between the entrance to this room and the kitchen entrance, you turn upon the left, at the landing, into a long and narrow chamber: upon the right hand, in this chamber, immediately as you enter, is a low basket fire-grate, set into a square of Dutch tiles, dimly relating Scripture histories, in the usual grotesque fashion. Next to the fireplace is the closet which contains the hiding-place. This is a second closet perpendicularly down in the floor of the first; it is of small dimensions, and is closed with a sliding panel. This retreat is in the square tower of the sketch, and oral tradition says, that down-

wards hence was a secret passage into the garden house, or story beneath, and thence freely out to the garden ground.

Next, by a steeper flight, garnished with hand ropes, we ascended into a long low room, open to the pitch of the gabled roof; this was formerly a cheese-room. † The retreat here is under the window as you plant your foot

* "Over the door of the enclosure" (says Stukely) "I took this inscription cut in marble.

FELICISSIMAM ARBOREM QUAM IN ASSYLUM
 POTENTISSIMI REGIS CAROLI II. DEUS O. M.
 PER QUEM REGES REGNANT HIC CRESCERE
 VOLUIT, TAM IN PERPETUAM REI TANTÆ MEMO-
 RIAM, QUAM SPECIMEN FIRMÆ IN REGES
 FIDEI, MURO CINCTAM POSTERIS COMMENDANT
 BASILIUS ET JANA FITZHERBERT.
 QUERCUS AMICA JOVI!"

† "The floor of the garret (which was a Popish Chapel) being matted prevents any suspicion of a little cavity with a trap-door over the staircase, where the King was hid: his bed was artfully placed behind some wainscot that shut up very close."—*Stukely*.

upon the floor from the stairs. The entrance is narrow, and I feared to



King Charles's Hiding-place.

descend, lest I should have to undergo phlebotomy or starvation before I could be extricated with safety; and such was a fearful predicament. The demure guide assured us that those who sought the King passed over this nook during his concealment. The "seedling child of the legendary tree" is situated within a stone's throw of the garden to the south-west: it is now a superannuated stem. The avidity of the distinguished royalists to obtain portions of the "Boscobel tree" soon played sad work with its many branches, and an irremediable decay prevailed earlier than perhaps would have been, but for its constant parturition

of whittle-hafts, snuff-boxes, tobacco-boxes, and even tooth-picks. When the King, after the fight of Worcester, consulted with Lord Talbot, the Earl of Derby, Lord Wilmot, and other friends, as to his own security, it was upon Kinver Heath, near to Kidderminster, at the evening twilight of a disastrous day. Here the Earl of Derby narrated his own preservation in his flight from Wigan to Worcester by a honest man of Boscobel, at the house of a recusant there, "full of means and safe contrivances;" and he advised his master to hasten thither. Mr. Charles Giffard, of Chillington, in that vicinity, was present with his servant Yates, and the plan was speedily provided. It was proposed by Giffard to carry his Majesty first to White Ladies (another residence of his family), about half a mile from Boscobel.

Arriving there, the whole attention of the retinue was the safety of the King. George Penderell, the woodward, was servant in the dwelling. Giffard immediately sent for Richard Penderell, who lived near at the "Hobbal Grange," and also sent to Boscobel Farm for William Penderell,

who was domestic in charge of that house. Richard was desired to bring a suit of mean clothes for his Majesty. On their arrival, these two brothers were introduced to Charles in the parlour at White Ladies, by the Earl of Derby, who addressed them:—"This is the King! Thou must have a care of him, and preserve him as thou didst me." And the loyal Mr. Giffard conjured them steadfastly to preserve their charge. A troop of rebel horse was quartered at Codsal, and under a sudden alarm, the jaded fugitive laid aside his jewellery, his insignia and clothing, and hastily dressed himself in the habiliments provided. Then Richard Penderell took his Majesty out by a secret way into an adjacent wood, called "Spring Coppice," and the few who were acquainted with his departure, with many tears and prayers, took leave of him. The brothers William, Humphry, and George scouted in the vicinity. The retinue then (about forty horse) left for the road towards Newport, intending to overtake General Lesley if practicable. Some of the Codsal dragoons came to the house immediately afterwards. The Earl of Derby, Lord Wilmot, the Earl of Lauderdale, and Lord Leveson, who had joined them upon the road, with a few attendants, and the accompanying troops, were soon afterwards hemmed in by scattered divisions of the rebels, beyond Newport, and routed. The principal men were taken prisoners. The Earl of Derby was tried by a pretended court-martial and executed; Giffard escaped from custody in an inn in Cheshire; others were sent to the Tower.

By the time Richard Penderell had conveyed his charge into the denser part of Boscobel Wood, it was sunrise on Thursday—the morning of a gloomy drizzling day. "The heavens," says the old record, "wept bitterly at these calamities." There was no place for his Majesty to rest by sitting down; the thickest tree could not shelter him from the rain.

Now Penderell, in this sad taking, hied away to Francis Yates' house (not far off), and borrowed a blanket (Yates' wife was sister to his own), with which he made a seat for the wearied object of his care. To this place, by direction, Goody Yates conveyed a breakfast of milk, with butter and eggs; and when the King evinced surprise at the introduction of such a fearful colloquial acquaintance, she answered in her truth and simplicity, "Sir, I will die sooner than I discover you!"

Meantime my Lord Wilmot, with John Penderell, was running all sorts of chances, pursuit, concealment, and confusion in the neighbourhood. However, all for the best; for, by the way, his guide fell in with Mr. Huddleston (afterwards a priest), who resided with Mr. Whitgreave, of Mosely Court, and entrusting his secrets to him, forthwith he hastened to inform Mr. Whitgreave (also a Catholic) of the business, who, hastening to Lord Wilmot's

quarters, conveyed him and his servant to Mosely, where they wished heartily that the King, whom he had merely named as "his friend," could be served with equal good fortune. Mr. Whitgreave, by daylight, sent a messenger with Wilmot's horses to Colonel John Lane of Bentley, who appointed a rendezvous near to Mosely in the dusk of the evening. This same Thursday, at dark, the King having ventured to Hobbal Grange, Dame Joan Penderell had the honour to behold her sovereign guarded by her good son Richard—a sight sufficient to endure, with ecstasies, for any old lady's lifetime. Hence the King, disguised as Will Jones, a woodman, went late, with his guardian, intending to reach Madely, in Shropshire, and to cross the Severn for Wales.

When Colonel Lane arrived, according to appointment, at Mr. Whitgreave's, both were acquainted by John Penderell of the King's (or rather of Wilmot's "friend's") westward flight. This was considered a disappointment, because the Colonel's sister had obtained a pass from a rebel commander for herself and a man-servant to go beyond Bristol to see Mrs. Norton, her kinswoman, who was near to her lying-in. "The pass" corroborates a current account that Lane, of Bentley, was an upright man in esteem of both parties, and much honoured by his neighbours of either side. This accommodation was forthwith offered to the nobleman, who took leave of Mr. Whitgreave with an abundance of gratitude, then for the first time disclosing his real name and title. The same evening he (Wilmot) partook of the security and hospitality at Bentley Hay.

After a vain attempt to reach the banks of the Severn, which, towards Madely, was particularly well warded by the victorious military, and after a succession of luckless trials and hair-breadth escapes, the King and his guide returned to Boscobel Wood; and at three o'clock on the Saturday morning the former remained in shelter there, whilst Penderell went into the house, which by this time was the refuge of Colonel William Carlis, who had seen the last man slain at Worcester, and was now seeking relief of his former acquaintance, William Penderell. The three returned to the wood (for Carlis had been playing at bo-peep in the forest shade), and brought the King with them into the dwelling, where he ate lustily of bread and cheese, and swigged off a posset, made by poor Dame William Penderell, of skim milk and sour beer. Here the party attended diligently to the comfort of the unfortunate monarch, cleansing his feet, shaking the gravel from his hose, and rattling embers about in his shoes to warm them dry. The remainder of that day Charles spent in the "thick-leaved oak" with Carlis, resting his head upon a pillow in the Colonel's lap, where he slumbered in his patience with uncommon refreshment.

In the evening he was conducted to the Earl of Derby's hiding-place, and was cropped and shorn by William Penderell, who used the scissors in the rustic mode. This day Humphrey Penderell was molested at Shiffnal, where he had gone to pay taxes; and the Roundheads, who knew the report of the King's shelter at White Ladies, threatened him with the penalty of concealment, mentioning, too, the reward of 1000*l.* promised for the apprehension of the fugitive. This night "my dame Joan," as Charles called the maternal hostess, procured a brace of fowls for his supper, the whilst the sons without kept place as worthy sentinels. On Sunday the King dined off some mutton collops cooked by himself and Colonel Carlis. The sheep, belonging to a neighbour, was stabbed by the latter worthy, and conveyed home on the shoulders of Will Penderell. His Majesty, some part of the day, read seriously in the arbour upon the mound in the pretty secluded garden. Meanwhile John Penderell was gone to Mosely; and Mr. Whitgreave and Mr. Huddleston, being informed of the character of the guest of Boseobel, and his ill-conveniencies, went straightway with the messenger to Bentley to consult with Wilmot, and thereupon Mrs. Jane Lane's Bristol journey was stayed for the time.

According to appointment made in council on this occasion, Charles, who was grievously footsore, was to be conveyed after midnight to Mosely Court; and this journey he made upon the shaggy steed belonging to Humphrey Penderell, the "Badger" of White Ladies Mill. The rider was fixed upon an old ragged saddle, and cautiously rode off, escorted by the faithful brothers, two in front, two behind, and one on either side, armed with bill, pike, staff, and concealed fire-arms; for their lives were set upon the business they had undertaken. "This horse," said the King, as he was jolted fore and aft with inconvenient inequality of pace, "is the heaviest and the dullest jade I ever rode upon." The owner replied, "He could not well blame, for the horse had the weight of three kingdoms upon his back!" Nearer to the destination the journey was upon foot, over hedges, ditches, and in obscure paths, until they arrived at the "trysting," a little grove of trees in the Pitt Leasowe of Mr. Whitgreave's estate.

Charles parted from the humble train with kindly salutations, and about three o'clock after midnight he was introduced to Lord Wilmot's apartment. They greeted affectionately, and the King immediately inquired after his friends in adversity—Buckingham, Cleveland, and the others. During the flight to Mosely he had stained his face with the juice of walnut leaves, at the advice of his forest friends; and he was attired now, as then, in a wretched steeple-crowned hat, a leathern doublet with pewter buttons, green breeches,

a rough country-cut coat of the same, a pair of stirrup stockings over his own disfigured hose, old shoes cut and slashed to ease his wounded feet, and linen of the coarsest description. At Mosely his personal comforts were attended to in a superior manner. He had a bottle of sack and a biscuit, and vapoured somewhat bravely "of driving the rogues out of the kingdom."

On Monday morning (the 8th of September), as it was not deemed prudent that he should sleep in an open chamber, he was conducted to one of the notable hiding-places; but it was close and inconvenient. He rested briefly, and then sat him down in a closet over the porch to survey the road. On Monday Lord Wilmot returned to Bentley to prepare for the King's departure with Lane's sister; and the same afternoon Mr. Whitgreave aroused the King, who was dozing upon Huddleston's bed, and hurried him to the hiding-place. Soldiers had arrived in quest of prisoners. Lord Wilmot had not then left the mansion; he also was concealed. The host admitted the soldiery, made show of much candour, and assured them, as other witnesses proved, that he had been at home for a fortnight; and with such asseverations they were satisfied and went their way. But upon the information of a cornet whom they had captured, they ransacked George Giffard's house at White Ladies, broke down the wainscoting, and for very malice gave their informant a delicious drubbing for his pains.

Mr. Huddleston instructed the youths of several Catholic gentlemen, and they resided under his care. On Tuesday he called these unto him, and, pretending indisposition and alarm of the soldiery, he bade them keep good watch from the windows around, and notice every one coming near. At supper, in the evening, young Sir John Preston, one of the boys, said to his comrades, "Come, lads! let us eat lustily, for we have been upon the 'life-guard' to-day." He knew not how truly he had spoken to them. This day the rebels at Westminster made proclamation for the discovery of Charles Stuart, and charged all officers of post towns that no person should pass the seas without especial licence.

At night, between twelve and one o'clock, his gracious Majesty returned fervent thanks to his preservers for his well-being, and he directed Mr. Whitgreave and Mr. Huddleston to a merchant in London, who would provide them with store and craft for a voyage, should emergencies press upon their discovery; and then, wrapped in Mr. Huddleston's cloak, and attended by the faithful Colonel, he made due haste to his near refuge. Hence, as we have described, he accompanied Mrs. Jane Lane and Lord Wilmot towards Bristol.

The succeeding adventures are generally known, and the royal acceptance

of the rich and poor who had assisted in his flight, with the gifts and favours he bestowed upon them at the Restoration, are equally told in popular histories. The persons privy to the first part of his Majesty's disguise and concealment were—Mr. Charles Giffard, of Chillington; Mr. George Giffard, of White Ladies; the five Penderells; their mother, and three of their wives; Colonel Carlis; Francis Yates and his wife; some of the people at White Ladies; Mr. Woolf (Richard Penderell's Madely acquaintance), and his family; Mr. Whitgreave and his mother; Colonel Lane and Miss Jane Lane.

The old trees of Boscobel Wood have fallen before the axe, and the "tree of refuge" is in open space. The Penderell line endures, and the name is accompanied with the royal pension. The Giffards and the Whitgreaves flourish in the vicinity; and the same kind, simple peasantry work upon the soil of their forefathers.

WHITE LADIES is about ten minutes' walk from "the oak" in the western direction. The ancient mansion has been desolated. The ruins of the solitary crueiform church or chapelry remain, buried with profuse ivy; and not a spot will repay better the fatigue of the excursion, when you wish to peruse your antiquarian scroll silently, and in a scene fraught with themes of meditation. The spot is fearfully quiet; not a house or a human form to be seen; only the woods of Boscobel, which bound the view on every side. The remains of the church are walled in, and the enclosure is used as a cemetery for the Catholic tenantry at Long Birch and the Black Ladies. We observed a venerable Norman arch; and, on turning away the ivy from the ground, we found a displaced piscina, through the duet of which an ivy stem had worked its way, returning, veiled with leaves, to shield from harm the relic of former devotion.

In a snug corner of the church is a stone to the memory of Dame Joan, who cooked for the runaway King, and lent him her son Will's green breeches, &c. Near to this is another, to the memory of Richard Penderell, son of "trusty Richard *," whose stiff leathern breeches, rustling in the darkness of the night, served the monarch for a humorous guiding token in the perils and intricacies of the journey. The cross and chalice, sculptured upon the slabs of stone, denote the place where repose the bones of the priesthood; and some of these ornaments are particularly interesting. There is one to be seen without the walls.

I must not forget the grave of Winifred White, because it reminds me of the amusing, though unintentional, alliteration in the title of a pamphlet pub-

* See note, next page.

lished by the late Dr. John Milner, of antiquarian remembrance — “Wonderful Cure of Winifred White, of Wolverhampton, at St. Winifred’s Well, in Wales.” The last tenant of note here was Squire Hanford, whose son was killed by leaping upon a concealed fork in the barn, at college, whilst in sport with his companions. To the inquiries of my friend, who gossiped with an infirm labourer upon returning to the main road, answer was made, “That not mainy persons loik’d to goo that ’aways, among the ode’ ruins i’ th’ dark o’night; not that, as he knowd, nothink had ever been seen clear right on, for nothink never had. I once of a time heard an older mon than me say, as how he ploughed once aside the chappil wall, and he kicked and cursed, and swore, and thrashed wi’ his whip, loik a Bedlam fool; but th’ hosses wouldn’t move. I reckon they come upon a dead mon’s grave, or one of the ode nun’s p’rhaps. I never heard no more about the place, of *that* sort.”

The ancient religious house of the White Ladies is situated in the county of Salop, and was dedicated to St. Leonard (the patron saint of persons in captivity). It was erected and endowed in the reign of King Richard I. The revenue at the Dissolution was valued at 17*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.* No impression of the conventual seal remains.

We left the ground honoured by scenes of loyal affection and regal endurance with feelings of regret, for it was the text of a whole summer’s day of remembrances. The old people had departed to the shadow-land, but their forms, re-created by imagination, dwelt upon the uplands, and threaded the forest wilderness, and lived again in the homely mansions of the by-gone

* “Trusty Richard” lies in the churchyard of St. Giles-in-the-fields, London, and over his remains is a tomb to his memory.



days; and though we could not agree to trump up extemporaneous eulogy for the "anointed" whom God preserved by the hands of his simple people, and who afterwards abandoned himself so shamelessly to the selfish sensualities of the palace and the bower, yet we would glow with admiration, mindful of his bravery at Worcester, his resignation in this wild seclusion amongst peasants and their inconveniences, and his remembrance of them in sunnier hours.

We stood by the eminence near to the gate which leads from the by-way to the common road, and gazed with immense delight upon the misty woodland vale extending towards the Cambrian side. The huge blue "Wrekin" reposed like a slumbering Titan in the grey of the hitherward horizon; and fields, watered by the Severn, succeeded for miles afar, like the indistinct pastures figured in the "mirage" of the wilderness. Bidding adieu to the enchanting prospect, we nurtured a half desire that some hapless prince could be kicked by tempestuous fortune into our path of pilgrimage, that we might emulate the Penderells in kindheartedness and loyalty, and lend him our apparel, even to our Macintosh and its *attaché*, the cotton umbrella. Alack! we only saw a fellow with a beer-bottle, wending to work with a stupid face, dreaming of his two luncheons and three meals a-day, and the promise of a thatch to his crazy hovel after his wife's next confinement.

Directed by the cleanly matron at Boscobel, we proceeded along the secluded road hence to BREWOOD, which lay about two miles and a half or three miles to the east; and when we had travelled about three quarters of a mile, refreshed by the cool western breeze and the beauty of the young foliage, whispering its first delightful sounds in the nooks of the diversified scene, we turned abruptly to the left down an irregular country road, proceeding through a pretty rural vale, occupied by antiquated cottages and quaint farming tenements, and by peaceful lanes leading to the homesteads of the unsophisticated tenantry. A foredrough, or cart road, open towards a flat of the wild space, brought us in view of the religious house of the "BLACK LADIES"—a Benedictine institution of considerable age. It was undergoing repair.

The Giffards of Chillington, to whom the people of the "olden faith" in this tranquil section of the county of Staffordshire are so much indebted, for deeds done as well unto themselves as to their persecuted ancestors, have now a place of worship at Brewood, erected by Pugin in the middle-age-parochial-church-style, the ground having been presented by Giffard of the Hall; consequently the straggling private chapels are likely soon to be surrendered to profane services. The house we are speaking of (the ancient



The Convent of the Black Ladies, at Brewood.

one) is so situated, as to be regarded as a mere farm, from the highway or the cross roads, which are of seldom occurrence. It is a lengthened, tall structure, gabled, with extended span at either extremity. At each end, a few feet from the outer limit, and in front, have been two bay projections (octagonal), with bold transomed casements for three stories in altitude; that at the left of the present entrance is remaining entire. Centrally are two projecting flats of building, tall and gabled, with an outline of indented brickwork, differing thus from the projecting stories mentioned previously, which are surmounted by octagonal pointed terminations. Between these was the former porch, now fashioned into a recess, illuminated with a modern casement. A lawn, bordered with parterre, and enclosed with a rude wall, lies before the building, (in this grows the stem of an immense "laurustinus,") to the right of which is an enclosed garden, and to the left a pool situated in front of the massive outbuildings. The edifice retires upon a considerable space in depth, where two sides of a large quadrangle, and the diminished side of a third (which is the chapel), lie close at the rear exit of the left portion of the building. This portion is of extreme age, containing the line of gallery promenade within, and the communication with the chapel, and

also the dormitories, and ordinary rooms of the sisterhood; and it is constructed of timber frame and plastered lath, presenting the streaked surface and the lozenge interlacements of the variegated exteriors of our great-great-grandfathers' time, and the antecedent centuries. This nunnery is mentioned by Gervase of Canterbury, and from this alone it is certain that it was in being in the time of King Richard Cœur de Lion. Tanner thinks even *before* that time. The founder is unknown. Probably it was the sister or widow of some red cross knight slain in the Holy Land, whose effigies have since been ousted from the parish church, at whose desecrated font he received the Christian name, and whose bones have long ago crumbled into kindred dust beneath the palms of Damascus and of sultry Ascalon. It was dedicated to the sempiternal honour of "the Blessed Virgin Mary" (truly thus, "Blessed amongst *women*").

At the taxation of Pope Nicholas the Fourth, in 1291, the Black Ladies held temporalities in the archdeaconry of Salop, rated six shillings per annum, the produce of a mill at Chetinton. Isabella occurs as the prioress before 1295. There are records relating to the institution in the reigns of King John, Henry III., Edward I., Edward II., and Edward III. At the Dissolution there were five nuns here. The conventual seal affixed to the *surrender* is in an impression upon red wax; it is of tolerable circumference, oval, and neatly engraved. It represents the Virgin Mother seated upon a rude throne, holding in her arms the infant Saviour; she has a palm branch in her hand. The inscription, "Sigillum Commune Nigrarum Monialium de Bre'." The estate was granted the same year as the surrender to a Giffard of Chillington, in whose family it continues. Previously to 1718, one Peter Giffard, afterwards heir to Chillington, resided here, and after this a Mr. Coffin, agent to the family. When the present fine mansion at Chillington was erected by Soane, the chapel was destroyed, and the congregation betook themselves to the sanctuary at the Black Ladies, which had been mured up for nearly sixty years. The present ancient chapel here cannot be discerned by scrutiny externally for the passages which form its lateral boundary. It appears to have been built intentionally thus, out of materials from the old monastery, and before the house was built. It is astonishing to consider how such a place of worship could have been preserved, whilst the penal laws were so rigorously executed, in the reign of Elizabeth and James I., nor even during the reigns of Charles I. and Charles II.

"Popish blood" served the refugee of Boscobel in noble part during the maintenance of bitter adversities; but even in his period (stat. 25. cap. 2.) we have an "Act for preventing dangers which may happen from popish

recusants;" and in stat. 30. cap. 1., "an Act for the more effectual preserving the king's person and government, by disabling papists sitting in either house of parliament;" and hereby the hunted recusants were disabled "from suing in any court," &c., "from taking any legacy or deed of gift," &c.,—cruelties only outrivalled by those which still maintain their savage force in the written laws of a country governed by a gentle queen, and which we believe are soon to be for ever obliterated. The venerable chapel, as we have previously stated, is a half timber building; the ceiling is entirely of oak, and portions of the tessellated floor still remain. There are two galleries, one at the west end, supported by twisted wooden pillars (formerly painted and gilded), and one at the side; that is, one for the choir nuns, one for the lay sisters. A curious little statue of "the Virgin," carved in wood, stands before the altar-piece, which represents "Mary the mother of Christ with the child in her arms, who is crowning her with a wreath of flowers." There is a passage leading from the body of the house to the choir, gallery, &c.; and another, in the inferior story, to the long passage, the ceiling of which is of cerulean blue, studded with golden stars. This part of the house is adjudged to contain the original foundations of the monastery of the fourteenth century. To the rear of the chapel and the transverse connecting building is a small paddock, overgrown with rank vegetation, and limited by a sullen brook, once the boundary of the simple cemetery of the "ladies of the nunnery." This water refreshed the fruitful orchards and sheltered pastures of the seclusion; for here all the world besides seems afar off, and the mind centres (as heretofore to these lonely Benedictines) upon the heaven, upon the sufficiency of the small estate around, and upon the altar of God, forsaken in the land.

We have no disposition to hazard a single polemical argument; but if the virtuous who chose to surrender earthly advantages, and who had retired to the sweet community of sister minds, actuated by the same predominant spirit of veneration, lived beyond the charge of indolence and sensuality, which only their worst enemies had attributed to them; if in temperance and frequent prayer they controlled the violence of peevish inclination, and held the soul in the silver links of affectionate correspondence with the Deity, doing the flowery work of charity the while, and inculcating the lesson of profane wisdom and religious information to the juvenile members of the simple flock, confiding in their learning and sanctity; then was it a hard case for them to surrender their few pounds of annual rent to ruthless, craving petitioners, and to make place for hard-hearted, avaricious men, seeking the things of the world out of the holy things of a humbler generation.

The internal disposition of the mansion is into parlours, and kitchen offices below, and aloft into roomy chambers and sitting rooms, the one story over the other, connected with each other in continuous maze, or falling into the course of a capacious northern gallery. The staircase ascending from the hall is elegantly carved, and was probably fixed there when tenanted by a Giffard in the Stuart period. The sun sets now upon the forsaken building, where once its sparkling evening shower of radiance lighted up the mementoes of the funeral ground beyond the little brook, and streamed with moted lustre to the footsteps of the decorated altar, the while the nuns walked in solitary meditation in the paths of the lovely garden, or wandered two by two in the avenues of the orchard, or the cool passages of the dusker east, repeating tearful legends of hermits and of virgin martyrs to each other, speaking sometimes of friends at home, and of joyful or mournful occasions therein, for which parents and sisters and brethren and youthful kinspeople desired their prayers of thanksgiving or of supplication. Nature, calm and lone in this sequestered boundary, never shall listen to a more pensive strain than echoed with the fall of dismal night, when by morning the wand of the jesting commissioner was to be planted upon the threshold, and these helpless women were to be summoned for ever from the heart of their own hearts. To the Almighty—to the hosts and powers of the eternal kingdom, they whispered the fervent prayer—

Potestates opem ferte,
En quot hostes nos asserite,
Quot occulte vulnerant!
Christi sudor et flagella,
Cruor, clavi, crux, mors, bella
Persequentium conterant.

With sad looks oftentimes they turned to breathe farewell to the home so dear to them. “Fiat voluntas tua,” they said, and weeping they went into the cold world again. Wordsworth sympathises feelingly with

— the ancient house laid low,
By Reformation’s sweeping overthrow.

“The short word, ‘reform,’ of our own time,” says a talented critical writer, “of the same meaning in politics as the longer one in ecclesiastics, will, whatever good it may project and perform, mingle more evil than need be, devastating where it should have repaired or rebuilt.”

Returning in pensive mood from the nook of antiquity, we conversed tranquilly of the changes of the sixteenth century (occasionally reverting to the possibility of procuring a dinner, before the sun went down upon two

hungry pilgrims fainting with excess of travel). In half an hour we arrived at the "Giffard Arms," in Brewood, the chief inn of the place, with an exterior of specious invitation.

"Landlord at home?" said the Pencil, after ringing a loud parlour bell for several minutes, and enticing a frightened child into sullen conversation.

"I'll fetch the girl," said 'little breeches,' and slowly retrograded. The servant appeared, two mental degrees above a petrification.

"Landlord is wanted!" we stormed at the placid attendant.

"Oh, I reckons you wants the missis."

"Where is she?"

"At the garden over the road."

"And where did you come from?"

"I've been to the garden, too."

A precious "hotel!" Inquiring for food, we found that neither beef, pork, nor mutton, fish or fowl, could be obtained. We dined contentedly off bacon, eggs, and a miniature salad, resting but a short while to enter memoranda, and then continued our journey. Some tombs of the Chillington family are in the church, but we eschewed the edifice as a pattern card of patchwork deformities. The town is excellently well fixed upon an eminence, and is as solitary a township, considering the substance and apparent consideration of the inhabitants, as one can well conceive. The little children of the public school were singing with musical simplicity the "Evening Hymn" as we left the churchyard; and it reminded us that the excellent Bishop Hurd received the rudiments of education at this humble seminary. The slant shadows of the mild evening sunshine fell veering eastward as we pursued our way, and the cawing rooks swung "in the windy, tall elm tree," and larks with fainter melody sung nearer to their refuge in the open field.

Soon we passed before the entrance to the celebrated giant avenue, which leads to CHILLINGTON HALL—an elegant building, upon a time-honoured estate, distinguished for the hospitality and sporting propensities of the junior branches, and for a lake of vast extent, spreading in the beautiful park, which is open to the throng of visitors who come here to spend their holidays, and who receive many kind favours from the generous proprietors. The Giffards were Counts of Longville, in Normandy, previous to the invasion; and a representative of the branch still extant there came into England several years ago upon a friendly visit to the late Thomas Giffard. They were lords of great note and very large possessions, were Earls of Buckingham, and masters of many lordships. Camden (in Stafford) writes, "Post hoc memoratu digna in hoc tractu occurrunt Chellington perpulchre ædes et

manerium antiquæ et celebris familiæ Giffardorum, quod regnante Henrico Secundo, Petrus Corbuchin dedit Petro Giffard, cui etiam Richardus Strongbow (ille Hiberniæ expugnator) Tachmelin, et alia in Hibernia donavit." Their chief seat seems to have been at Brinsfield in Gloucestershire: one of the family married a heiress of Chillington and settled there. Thus Camden (in Gloucestershire, after Winchelcombe), "*Inferius Brinsfield jacet, quæ suos olim dominos habuit Giffardos,*" &c. And he proceeds to mention that this came to them by marriage from the Cliffords, and went by heiresses to the Stranges of Blackmere, and to the Audleys. In the collection of "*Boscobel Tracts,*" edited by Hughes, we read that no county in England at the time of the civil war abounded more with Catholic families than Staffordshire. We think that the county of Lancaster may dispute the fact. However, in support of the former opinion, and upon inquiry respecting the family in question, we heard that, even from the time of the Reformation, they supplied their tenantry and the neighbourhood generally with priests and chapels; and it is recorded, that for many years three or four priests resided on the estate, and did duty at the places of worship stationed there. In 1107 we find William Giffard, Bishop of Winchester; in 1264, Walter, Bishop of Bath and Wells, translated to York in 1266; Godfrey, Bishop of Worcester, in 1268; Walter, Chancellor of Oxford, in 1311; William, Archbishop of Rheims, and first peer of France in 1623, with others of the later period, redolent of honour. Basil Fitzherbert, of Swinnerton, inherited Boscobel by marriage with Jane, daughter and heiress of John Cotton, Esq., by Frances, daughter and heiress of John Giffard, Esq." He beareth gules (says Guillim) three lioncels passant impaled argt., by name of Giffard. Walter Giffard, Earle of Longville, in Normandy, came into England with William I., by whom he was made the first Earl of Buckingham, and was witness to the charter of King Henry I. for the reformation of the laws and customs of England." See the rest in the pages of the "*Banner Displayed.*"

"Giffard's Cross" is in the long avenue, about a mile from the Hall, and the popular tradition (variegated according to the ideality of the fire-side informant) is, that one of the old squires, standing near to his residence in the evening, perceived a strange beast hurrying along at a considerable distance, and bearing in its mouth the clothed form of a human being. With courageous impulse he ran forward, and having then his mighty cross-bow upon his shoulder, he levelled it and lodged the bolt in the ribs of a snarling panther, which, having escaped from the confinement of one of the few menageries then exhibited, was scudding through the congenial woods of Chillington with the injured body of a beautiful male infant, which recovered

from the violence inflicted upon its tender limbs, and was afterwards reared and advanced in life through the wealth and interest of its preserver. The cross indicates the spot where the beast was stricken to the ground. A family near to Wolverhampton, in whom the hereditary "hare-lip" exists, are, by stupid gossips, reported to be the descendants of the child; but this militates against the truth of the story, as the wounds of the infant were healed long before it arrived at matrimonial age.

Keeping our path along a level and retired highway, skirted by wide arable, and garnished with a few mean cottages, we stopped at the distance of a mile and a half to scrutinise an old building, termed LONG BIRCH in



Long Birch.

our maps of reference. By the courtesy of Mr. Ingram, the tenant, we received permission to enter; but he told us the principal rooms, containing books, furniture, and paintings, were closed in the absence of the chaplain at Brewood, who resided there occasionally. The building, externally, consists of three gabled divisions in the Elizabethan style of architecture; the gabled attic being the uppermost of three capacious stories of apartments. A pleasant avenue of birch trees conducts you to the enclosure and to the porch.

Upon the side of the dwelling, facing to the highway, the architect, with that pertinacious adhesiveness to the "defensive" form which characterised the previous century, has thrown up the main of the building into the appearance of a double tower, square, and of ordinary brickwork: and this, with the outline of the former portion, gives the picturesque appearance which it bears upon inspection from the road. We saw nothing of interest in the interior of the chapel, forty-one feet in length and twenty in breadth, and ornamented after the fashion of recent days. We made some inquiry as to legends or histories connected with the place, but the farmer shook his head, caring little for our zeal, and, indeed, he seemed to be one of those who consider "a ghost" by no means the most respectable of one's ancestry or acquaintance. We suspended the question, for as we talked together in the

shelter of the religious apartment, a fine, juvenile, ruddy, buxom sample of the gentler kind skipped in from a closet entrance, and disenchanted us at once from the world of spirits to the notice of the comelier reality, luxuriant in youth and strength and rustic vigour. This was the jointure house of the widow of Thomas Giffard, who died in 1718. She herself died at the age of ninety-five, and was buried in the parish church at Brewood. The bishops, or vicars apostolic of the midland district, rented the house afterwards of the Chillington Squire, and resided here in succession with their chaplains.

Now the wind blew cool indeed, and the red sun, hovering over the mysterious gorgeousness of the glowing west, bade farewell to legendary towers, to the mound of forest trees over the glooming vast of Chillington, to dim bowers of Maythorn and the funeral wands of dark green poplar trees in the willowy waste by the brook of the mill, which fell into denser shadow within the covert of yellow osier boughs, and we, with stout perseverance, travelled on with regret of the failing lustre of the happy day; and when we arrived, in the dulness of the evening, by winding lanes and fords of trickling rivulet,



Mosely Hall.

to the fine old loyal mansion of MOSELY HALL, scarcely could we distinguish the diversified range of the surrounding trees; nothing, indeed, but the misty boundary, the pied architecture of the whitened plaster, and the sable beams of wood, hoisted in perpendicular mosaic and obscured by the descending veil of night. In the accompanying sketch, the casement upon the second story of the left wing, round which the arms of creeping leaves are clustered, appertains to the chamber which King Charles occupied. We quote the words of the chronicler Hughes:—"On ascending the staircase which fronts the porch, you arrive at a landing-place, with which three doors are in communication. One of them leads into the small study over the entrance, where the king seated himself some time in the day to reconnoitre the road." Another, close to this, belongs to the chamber we have mentioned; and at the back of this room was the inconvenient hiding-place, entered by the closet door as usual, and in communication by a secret exit with the offices. The lower door was on the side of a large brewhouse chimney, down which the passage descended. The meadow near the house is still called the Pit Leasowe. "There is," says the historian, "an air of seclusion and weather-beaten respectability about old Mosely Hall redolent of jack-boot, and bandalier, sack, and buff-belt." The hall is now reserved for the chaplain and the bailiff, Mr. Whitgreave having betaken his own family to a stylish modern residence within a short distance of the former one.

"Welcome to the home prepared for us!" said my comrade; "welcome the dear friends who await upon our arrival, and give the kindly thought which forestalls the ministry of friendship."

"No trudger to the shrine of St. Jago from the turf of Erin, or the bergs of wintry Iceland," I replied, "ever stood more in need of rest and shelter than I do now: but patience! we are in sight of the beacon."

Along the remainder of the road we had four miles of colliery and coal work, with the huge brick "rookery" of the Wolverhampton purlicu and its dingy denizens. Smoke was the boundary of the immediate space we trod upon; aloft, the fire wreathed its lambent gushes of flame; the harsh discord of human voices, attuned in barbarous dialect, blended with the grunting and squeaking of overstrained machinery; all but in one void space in the west, over the feet of the upland of the Sedgley range, and there the twinkling evening star spread its glorious points of light, and gave us cheerful invitation to worship its beautiful form in the lovelier twilight of a future day. We here could take no

— thought of the calm vesper time,
With its low murmuring sounds and silver light.

There was nothing of nature abroad to love for its own loveliness and to connect with the better worship of the wearied spirit, seeking peace worthy to rest upon; a hope maternal in adherence, tranquil and secure. That evening we shared our joys with friends endeared to us by more than promises; and we slumbered deeply, with dreams, nevertheless, of wildness and grotesque arrangement—Richard Penderell and Father Huddleston dancing with Nelly Gwynn and the French damsels at Whitehall, Carlis thrashed by farmer Staunton for stealing his mutton, and the hungry panther of Chillington fast asleep within the emptiness of the Brewood hotel, with now and then an interlude of hurricane and non-existence, over which flew the owl and many shadows indescribable, with ever and anon a Cromwellian trooper in scarlet, or a pale lady of the nunnery trailing at her bony heels an immeasurable quantity of sable vesture—

—— l'aere bruno
Toglieva l'animai che sono in terra
Dalle fatiche loro; ed io sol uno
M' apparechiava, a sostener la guerra. DANTE.

—— the air embrown'd
Took each terrestrial spirit from its toil;
It seem'd that I alone sustain'd
A conflict in my soul.

And thus sleep with dreams prevailed, the body quaffing its boon of refreshment; and when the tinkling town bell rang in the silent streets, we were at once and together upon the floor of the chamber, and busy with the plan of the onward pilgrimage.

At this stage it would be well to note down for the instruction of any wandering gentleman who may please to follow in our track on some future holiday, that we purposely have omitted mention of some interesting objects, because we had visited them antecedently. About a mile and a half from Wolverhampton, (leaving the road towards Dudley for a highway leading to Penn through Goldthorne Hills,) is a fine avenue of elm-trees, conducting to a mansion once the hunting hall of the Dudley family. It is now a Catholic seminary, having been established as such in the year 1760. The principal and the tutors of Sedgley Park School behave with much courtesy to their numerous visitors. In the archives are some memoranda relating to the school days of John Kemble, who was educated there, and who was removed thence to a college in France for the completion of his education. The procurator would feel pleasure in opening those manuscript books for the inspection of persons curious in such biographical material. The house is

but a few fields' distance from the course we pursued from Wolverhampton to Sedgley, as denoted in the small map accompanying the first part of the Wanderings. No lover of natural history should omit to visit the splendid geological museum in the New Street of Dudley, containing the rare lime and coal fossils of the surrounding district. The great fossil fish, the *Megalichthys Hibbertii*, is from the collection of my excellent and learned kinsman Richard Cooper, Esq. of Bilston. There is no difficulty whatever in surveying the mines and iron-works of South Staffordshire. All parties are most attentive to strangers.



CHAPTER III.

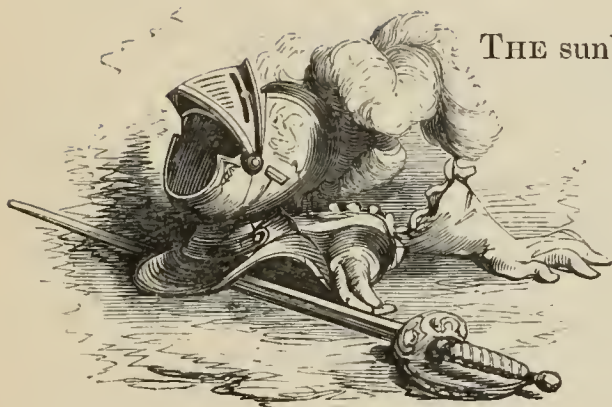
THE IRON FORGES OF BILSTON. — THE CHAPEL OF ST. LEONARD. — DARL-
LASTON DIALECT — VIEW FROM THE PARK FARM.

WALSALL — ITS CHURCH, AND RHYMING DISTICH THEREON. — THE TOWN
HALL, WOLVERTON HALL, AND ROBARD ACTON'S BILL IN THE STAR
CHAMBER AGAINST BAYARD AND HIS COLTES. — SEALS OF THE COR-
PORATION. — HENRIETTA MARIA AND QUEEN ELIZABETH. — IRON
MANUFACTORIES. — CORPORATION CODES. — CUSTOMS AND TRADI-
TIONS. — BESCOTT HALL — ITS SYLVAN SITUATION. — THE RAILWAY
AND RAILWAY TRAVELLERS.

BIRMINGHAM. — NOVEL WAY OF OBTAINING A VIEW OF IT. — A PRO-
POUNDER OF TRUISMS. — TAMWORTH. — SURROUNDING SCENERY. —
TAMWORTH CHURCH. — CURIOUS STAIRCASE, ARCHITECTURAL PECU-
LIARITIES, AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL REMAINS. — THE CRYPT. — TAM-
WORTH CASTLE AND TOWN. — THE WARDERS OF THE CASTLE. — THE
HALL AND STATE ROOMS. — CURIOUS FIREPLACE. — THE "FLEUR DE
LYS," AND ITS FREQUENTERS. — A LOQUACIOUS BARBER. — GUY, THE
FOUNDER OF THE HOSPITAL AT SOUTHWARK.



CHAPTER III.



THE sunbeams were sparkling in the eastern sky, and the long cool shadows lay upon the road from trees and hedge-rows and cottage boundaries, when in early morning we resumed our pleasant way together, turning often to either side as other objects and outlines of distant places appeared around.

“How the ‘jury’ who rendered in the information of the Conqueror’s survey would stare to see *this* Bilston (the town in the rear), so black, so infernal, so densely populated, and so singularly altered from the Billestune of the ‘Dome boc!’ ‘In Billestune sunt ij hidæ Tra ē iij car. Ibi sunt viij villi 7 iij bord ē iij car. Ibi j ær prati. Silva dimid. leuc. l̄g 7 dimid. latitud. valuit xx. Solid. modo xxx sol.’”

“Every place,” replied I, “which you can mention, would puzzle them; none scarcely so much as this one. The woods have long since been swept away to produce charcoal for the smelting-houses established earlier elsewhere in the vicinity. Some of our ancient cities in England retain the presence of venerable trees upon the soil, and were shadowed by their verdant predecessors at the most remote period, when groves advanced even to the precincts of the market-place and guild-halls, reminding one of the classical precedent —

Lucus in urbe fuit media, lætissimus umbra.

Full in the centre of the town there stood,
In branching pride, a venerable wood.

The space around us, now redolent of forge and fume, almost on all sides was dense forest in the Druid times, and the name of the place itself is connected with their worship—‘Belisdune.’ That little chapelry of St. Leonard, but two centuries ago, was the humble place of worship devoted to a few quiet country gentlemen, and a feeble gathering of simple cottagers. In the thirteenth century many churches were standing, named after St. Leonard; and his festival then and in those warlike times was a ‘day of obligation’ from

servile work. The saint inhabited a cell in the forest of Pauvain, four leagues from Limoges. He had been a peer in the court of Clovis the First, and was converted by the pious discourses of St. Remi, after the 'fight of Tolbiac.' He was much invoked (after his canonisation) for the 'delivery of prisoners.' An old legend states that the Signor de Bacqueville, who was detained in deplorable captivity by the Turks, received an instantaneous relief through his intercession, and was all at once transported from his prison to the steps of the altar of his private chapel of De Bacqueville."

Relating this story with lengthened phrase, and breaking the toil of travel with question and answer, brief and concentrated as the wisdom of the "Pin-nocks" so much in vogue, we arrived at a very dirty, vulgar-looking place, termed DARLASTON — a hive of manufacturers of gun-locks and such like contrivances, where we tarried only to cleanse our eyelids from the falling smut, and to pause a few seconds at a time to avoid the clouds of smoke wafted from the coke fires upon the western wind.

The dialect of the mining vicinity prevails here with unsophisticated hardihood. A huge bony-cheeked girl was sauntering under the hedge-row a short distance from the town. A grim, flannel-jacketed swain, of the earth-diving species, walked at the other side of the bank, and ogled her betimes with amorous ferocity.

"What brings yo he-ar?" said the lady.

"Whoi! our gaffer ha'n-na coom to tha pit yit," said the snub-faced admirer. "Sh'on I goo alung with thee, Bess?" he added (with affecting modulation of voice, and a corresponding "dowk" of the head).

"Au chap, if thee loikst!" was the gracious permission.

"Well, wench, we'-ar bist gooin to?"

"Noo we-ar!" returned the hob-nailed Venus of Darlaston.

It is reported by a friend of mine, that two of the unadulterated humanities of this town once sallied off upon a Sunday's idle ramble to a village at some distance, and their attention was at once arrested by a lightning conductor attached to the small steeple, which had been split open into several gaping chinks by a recent thunder-storm.

"Well, ne-ow, oi be dom'd if ever I sid anythin' loik these he-ar chaps! They ha'n toid th' ode tumble down thing to a stick, like a broken 'daffy-down dilly!'" said the Mentor of the two.

Between Darlaston and Walsall, upon the left hand as you proceed, and soon after crossing the track of the Liverpool railway, there is a farm, called "the Park Farm," from which you obtain a panoramic view worthy of observation, the entire western view being absorbed in the gloomy coal-

field, widening gradually from the horizon towards the central point. Commencing on the right (with the outer boundary), you see Wolverhampton, already noticed for its interesting church and other remembrances; then, the Beacon Hill; the long ridge of Sedgley transition limestone; the Dudley Peak, with its "keep;" the rocks of Rowley; the flat country towards Birmingham; next, the woodlands of Sandwell (celebrated once for its Benedictine priory); and the Perry woodlands, with their embosomed mansion, lately the property of the descendants of "old Squire Gough!" The woods of Barr and Sutton follow upon the horizon, skirting the waste lands of the coal-field, once continuous with Cannock Chase, and still connected by the Druids' Heath. Antiquaries have decided that Barr Beacon was the locality used by the British priests for the publication of their quarterly solemnities. The "Icknield Way" runs over the adjoining wilderness. The circle unto Wolverhampton again is completed by the uplands of Pelsall, the Bloxwich township, the Essington woods, and Bentley Hay. To the west (in the inner circle of townships) lie Bilston and Darlaston, in the smoke of the mining lands; Wednesbury upon a commanding eminence (the present church occupying the site of the fortress erected in the Saxon period by Ethelfleda, "the lady of Mercia"); and Walsall, upon the east, about five miles from Bilston and six from Wolverhampton, standing upon a striking eminence of lime rock, the next stage of travel and investigation. Dwelling upon this view, whilst the refreshing breeze fanned our sultry brows, and the young boughs waved around with gentle sway, we sat down to cheer our fainting corporalities with crust and cruse, and to review the labours of other hours. All the fair while, to the team afield in the adjoining enclosure of lands, the lark arose and sang aloft, surely to be named, if ever spirits of heaven dwell in humble forms, "the ploughboy's guardian angel!" and there we listened, as a world of happy people have done before us (children and ruddy old grey beards), to the chain of brilliant cadences, and to such rich gurgling suspirations as affection burdened with joy, even to exhaustion, metes unto the object of its thrilling love; the hurried and the prolonged staccato alternately prevailing; then the rapid distinct vibration of feebler notes (like uttered poesy); the bird descending, in oblique course, to the home of its fluttering mate, as the finale came by a pathetic glide upon two soft notes. We started to our feet, and cheered the minstrel bird; then we placed staff to the ground, and proceeded upon our way.

The sky was intensely blue, varied only with an indistinct shoal of flocky clouds. The atmosphere was glowing with vernal heat—warmth with perfume. We had been induced to believe that the town of WALSALL would be

worth losing some part of our appointed path to survey, and we were disappointed. The town is much inferior to those in its vicinity, but contains some elegant habitations upon the Lichfield road: the modern church, erected upon the summit of the lofty hill upon which the town is built, and from which the High Street singularly descends, is a grand imitation of something in the architect's portfolio, and a very fine church indeed, for the money bestowed upon it! A few oaken carvings of the olden foundation are in the chancel, and an arch has been graciously permitted to remain in its original situation over the completion of the walk round the cemetery. The people have their rhyme here—

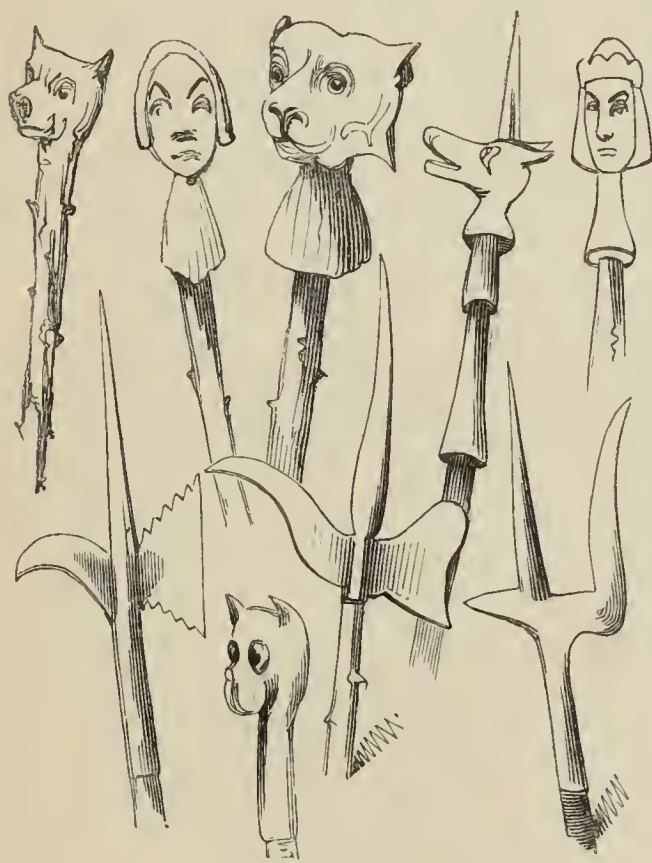
Our new church, our old steeple,
Our proud parson, our poor people.

But their boasted steeple is nothing veritably "old," being a thing of the last century, perforated plentifully for the sky-light with circular apertures, similar to the radiated disks of the far-famed "patent frying-pan gridirons." We visited the Town Hall, where a hearing of cases occurred before two very proper looking functionaries, upon the day of our arrival. In this building (a shabby concern externally, but of sufficient official convenience) are suspended in a rack upon the wall, to the right of the court as you enter therein, some dozen or more of grotesquely ornamented and armed staves, represented in the sketch. The Actons (once an eminent Saxon family), who now reside at Wolverton Hall near to Worcester, are descendants of Robert Acton, a groom of King Henry VIII.'s bedchamber, who was a considerable favourite with his royal master, and, as tradition goes in the family, received a pretty handsome profit out of the forfeited estate of the Evesham monastery, &c. At Wolverton Hall, in the wainscoted parlour, there is preserved an engraved brass plate, which sets forth with the heraldry that such was given to "Mastere Robarde Acton, by y^e Kyng Henry VIII." Now of this same Robert and the Walsall people is the following.

*"The Effect of the Bill in Starre Chambrere 'gaynste Bayard
and his Coltes.*

"In the sixteenth yere of King Henry VIII. his reign, one Robard Acton, Squire, one of the groomes of the King's chamber, preferred a bill into the starre chamber, against one Richarde Hopkins, Richard Bingley, and Nicholaus Woodwarde, of Walsale, wherein hee shewed that, whereas hee being possessed of the King's manor of Walsale for his lyfe, by virtue of

the King's letters patent, they three being wilful and obstinate persons, having wrongfully withheld from him, and so had done a long time from the Kynge divers parcells of lande and divers yeerly rents, customes, and servises, paying nothing therefor to y^e Kynge, ne to hym the patentee and fermor of the said manor; and had maintained the Kynge's bondsmen, regardant to the sayd manor, and doe say and affirm that they bee free, and have cut down greate trees in Walsale Park; that they and other misdemened persons have hunted by nighte as well as by day in the parke, and killed divers of the King's deere; wherewith he, the sayd Robert Acton, not being contented, hath often required them to forbeare, and required them to pay the yerely customes, rentes, and services which belonged to their tenures, or else he would no longer suffer them in theyr evyl doings, but would complayn to the Kynge. Whereupon the sayd Hopkyns, Bingley, and Woodward openly sayd to the said Robert Acton, that if he would not suffer them to doc as they had done in tyme past, they would raise Bayard of Walsale with his thousand colts!! and sett and appoint 400 men to revenge their quarrel upon him; and that they would ring 'Bayard's belle!' soe that all



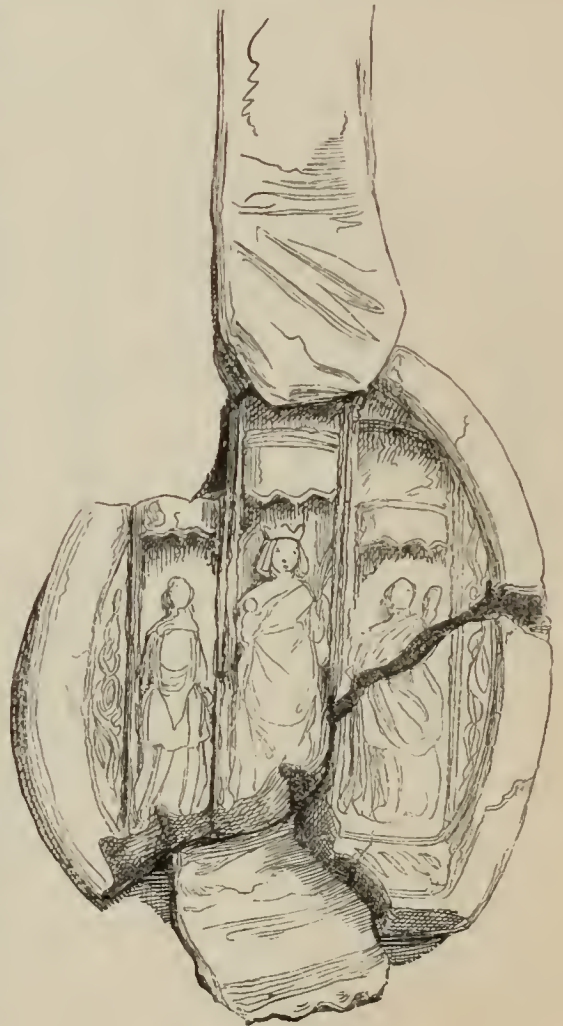
Walsall Colts.

the towne of Walsale shoulde arise forthwith bye the meanes thereof, whether the matter were righte or wronge! And shewed that the inhabitants of the sayde towne were light persones! suddenlie moved to affrays and insurrections (as was well knowne). And the rather, because Bayard and his thousand colts being greate clubbes, and have bene of longe tyme set and hanged uppe in the towne halle of Walsale; and there beene taken and reputed in as much honor and worshippe as if they were sainets in the churehe! and bee at certain times in the yere solemnly bore about the town in grete reverence, which thing to be suffered is a grete abomination and

the worst example for the maintenance of evyll rule within the sayd town that

can be devised. Ande for that the sayd evyll and disordered persons intend to be borne and mayntayned in their ungracious acte and quarrels by them daylie done, they have a certayne box called ‘Bayard’s Box,’ in the which be greate sums of money, purposely from the same box gathered, to mayntain their evyll doings,” &c. &c. These staves of late years were carried before the mayor at the proclamation of the fairs and other public processions, but their number annually fell short, and for preservation the remainder were housed in this public hall.

There are many valuable deeds and records relating to this township, worthy of the perusal of the antiquary. The seal bearing the mutilated equestrian figure, is from an original in wax, attached to a slender document given in the first year of the reign of Henry IV., and confirming an ancient release to the Walsall men from market tolls, “de bonis et rebus.” The second is in red wax—the seal of “Arundel, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry,” consecrated 1496, translated to Exeter 1502. In his lifetime the library of brick structure at Lichfield was completed. He died of an acute disorder in London soon after his translation, and was buried in St. Clement’s Church in the Strand. The parchment to this seal is the “order affirmative” upon a petition, interlined in English, of “the mercers, taylors, drapers, shearmen, wevers, coopers, and barburs dwellyng in Walsale,” for the protection of their united craftes as connected with the church and chapel of St. Katherine therein, with certain items of fine, forfeit, and order of subscription to the church, chapel, and craft in general. The Arundel escutcheon quarterly is evident at the lower portion of the subject. There is also an account:—“The borough of Walsall debtor to the constable, Henry Wood, for what he disburst for the town from October, 1661, to October, 1662.” Amongst the items these—



Red Wax Seal.

	£.	s.	d.
Paid to the souldiers for there pay for eight dayes	-	-	-
Ffor carrying of there armes, bestowed in beere of y ^m	-	-	-
Paid to the muster master	-	-	-
Ffor getting the cucke-stoole out of y ^e towne brooke	-	-	-
Paid to the high constable for maimed souldiers, &c.	-	-	-
Ffor scowreng of the constable his staffe	-	-	-
Paide to 45 club-men that walked y ^e faire	-	-	-
Paid for a pounce and a halfe of gun-powder y ^{tt} was shott away on the kinges holy-day	-	-	-
Ffor a horse two dayes more when I went to Stafforde, to give in a presentment of those who had bene actually in armes against his majesty	-	-	-
Ffor hire of a horse to Lichfield, when I summoned in those that were behind of the <i>free present to the kynge!</i>	-	-	-
The whole amount is moderate, viz.	-	-	-
	-	3	5
			3

Henrietta Maria, queen of Charles I., was at Walsall on the 8th of July, 1643, previous to her meeting with the King at Edge Hill. There is good reason to believe (in the teeth of the archæologist Hamper) that Queen Elizabeth remained here two days. In the archives of the town is a grant of estates bearing her seal, the grant concluding as follows:—“*Teste me ipsa, apud Walshale; tertio decimo die Julii, anno regni nostri vicessimo octavo.*” The other records are too numerous to mention; and as they are not connected with any object of much interest existing in the town and relating to earlier days, we dismiss the inquiry. The staple trade here is of saddlery, ironmongery, and harness metal, in every department. We visited an extensive manufactory belonging to Mr. James Marlow, in the “hamlet of the Windmill,” and saw the



Corporation Seal.

various articles prepared for exportation, from the “bullock chain” of the Canadian emigrant to the hugely rowelled, plaited spur of the Mexican muleteer and the heavy intricate adornment of the Mameluke stirrup iron. We were at no loss to detect in some of these home-made samples

articles exhibited frequently as *curiosities* in the cupboard museums of provincial rarity-hunters. Birmingham was formerly denoted in the superscription of letters as “near to Walsall;” thus being figured down as an inferior station. Some have gone so far as to state that Walsall was far in advance of Birmingham in manufactured iron goods at a much earlier period. Now I do not believe this at all, for Camden and Leland both mention the “toy-shop of Europe” (as it has since been termed) as abounding *with forges, smiths, and lorimers*; and yet the “crafte” of Bishop Arundel’s period hints at nothing which can induce us to believe that “a lorimer” (or horse-trapping maker) existed *then* in Walsall, or in the fraternity or guild. The occupations were set down in the document as before related. Influential persons residing in Staffordshire, and holding interest at court, had obtained from several kings of England rights and privileges for the town of partial benefit; and in the plenitude of power, and under the sanction of cruel laws, its arbitrary powers were fiercely ridiculous: *vide code of laws*. If once or twice “warnyng” did not “amend,” as it was expressed, a taverner, who allowed drinking after certain hours, then the said alehouse was to be “pulled down by command of the mayor and his brethren,” such as Hopkins, Bingley, and Woodward, to wit: and read this ye Venetian novel readers, scared with the history of the “lion’s mouth” — “N. B. If any persons disorder them by worde or dede against any of the xxiv. (a corporation), they shall avoyd the town within vii days’ warning.” It must also be remembered that by the Act of Charles II., which only regulated preceding acts of more vicious cruelty, no persons possessing money or property under a certain sum could settle in the skirts of one of these waspish corporations without danger of being “passed” by mandate to his own parish (even when beyond the necessity of seeking an alms or parochial relief). Had it not been for these injurious regulations, Birmingham would now have divided its wealth and population with its solitary feud-bound neighbour upon the limestone rock overlooking the Staffordshire coal basin. The Constables’ Act previously given (in part of the items), is full of expences for “passing” men, women, and children to the distant counties. At this place there was a singular custom of distributing a penny or a penny loaf annually, upon the eve of Twelfth Day, to every person in every family of the town and of the hamlet thereunto, by the hand and announcement of the bellman. Tradition says, that one Thomas Mosely of this place, in his lifetime, a many years gone by, once heard a wretched child screaming of starvation on the eve of the Epiphany, and that, determined such never again should occur, he settled his manor of Bascot, in the county of Warwick,

upon the town, to provide the dole accordingly, and within the liberties of Walsall for ever. The truth is, that the gift was an optional remembrance of the worthy yeoman, whose estate, in course of time, fell into the hands of the corporation; and though much riot was made by the populace to counteract every attempt to withhold the custom, it was at length quashed by erecting some substantial almshouses for aged people out of the profits of Mosely's lands, or whatever else the principal might be denominated.

Taking a road of rural character, skirted by pleasant hedge-rows, the boundaries of tranquil fields, and shadowed by tall whispering trees, whose agitated foliage came rushingly upon the ear, like sounds of the sheeted waves of a far distant fall of water at some unwearied mill, and accompanied by the recurrent, playful windings of a shallow rippling stream, we continued in the direction towards Wednesbury, intending to throw our wearied selves into some improbable west-country coach, or an "omnibus."

We are now close to the railway station upon the Liverpool and Birmingham line, and I fancy we shall prefer that speedy conveyance to Birmingham rather than our intended circuit upon the uninteresting road, according to the plan made out for us. We will just break through the private limits, and steal a view of the site of old BESCOTT HALL, the seat of the Hillaris and Mountforts of departed centuries. The manor is situated on the south-west side of Walsall parish, upon the road to Wednesbury, and is to be found in old writings as *Berkenscot*, and in Dome Boc as *Bresmundscote*. By inheritance, forfeiture, and purchase, it has passed through many hands since the death of Sir Roger Hillary, fourth year of Henry IV. The modern house is in front of the ancient moated garden. How lovely is the exquisite yellow green of the low pastures! Every tree is a bower of vernal beauty, and a sweet resort for glad singing birds, a plaything for the random breeze! The hasty runlets of meadow water laugh in the sunshine of the lofty blue sky, and in every covert hangs some snowy branch of bending blossom, almost illuminating the darker things around. You look through the twinkling leaves of the shining, broad-leaved poplars, and the luxuriant waving ringlets of fair laburnum, and between the bare aged arms of the later blooming stems, covered affectionately at the trunk with closest ivy garlands, and you see the red heights of the distant town, the far-wending smoke, the dappled dairy-cows in the nearer fold, and, nearer still, the undulating, lengthening verdure of fields, rich with blue and pink and yellow flowers, with the visible footsteps of the wind walking over them.

"We rest delightfully upon our trespass here," said my friend, "and it is cooling to the body and to the mind to look down upon the dark,

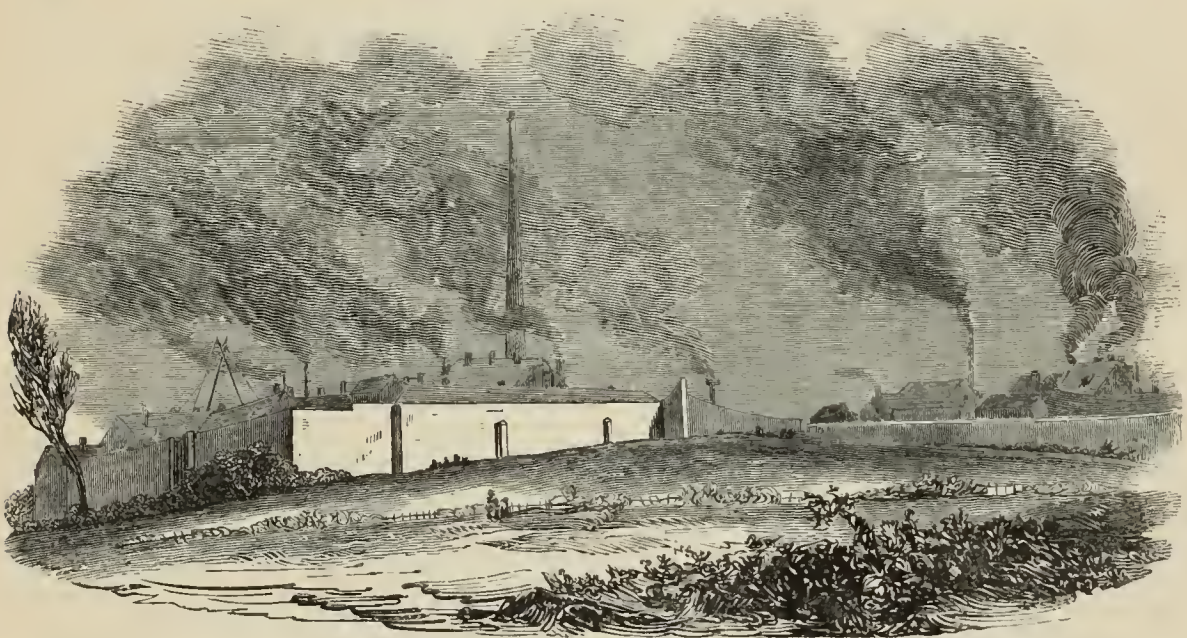
legendary water, shaded by the herbage and trees of the moated ground. You remind yourself of forms of life once clustered within the 'wharf' of the present Lethe. A vague regret for the annihilation of a life similar to one's own pulsating existence visits you, and feelings which make you, that 'you know not how you feel!'"

"Yes," I replied; "but continue the thought, and the truer sentiment prevails. We instinctively imagine the good that was done, the kind and virtuous, domestic and public deeds, and the evil that was performed by the mouldering generation, and then we have made a moral to the scene. The soul vibrates more deeply and sonorously, and brings into concord alternate eulogy of virtue and dispraise of its vicious enemies; and then, too, conscience steps in, and parentally inquires, What good or what evil have we done, or still are doing, in the flesh, that we must answer for in the spirit at an inevitable account hereafter?"

The whistling of the cords upon the signal staff at the railway station, and the ascent of the red canvas at the instant, recalled us to more ordinary considerations. We leaped the boundary with staff in hand, and hastened to the quiet booking-office; and soon afterwards, with a snarl and a whistle, the huge train, with its fire-light and smoke, and brass and sable, and its liveried attendants, lay ready to our convenience, and we thrust ourselves into close quarters with an aged gentleman, a venerable dame, and a very mournful-looking youth, who engaged our commiseration. The poor young fellow but then found out that he had lost a pocket-book, containing a trifle in gold, which was to carry him on to a situation in London. How it vanished he could not tell; but certainly it was gone; and by the colourless, vague expression of his face, and an increasing tear in the corner of his eye, the loss was no trifle to him—perhaps the gift of a more tearful father, or the hard-earned contribution of a sister in humble life. The lady who was our partner in the space of the carriage had relieved herself from painful and uncomfortable sympathy by falling into a sonorous sleep, the small-peaked red nose emerging from the tulip-streaked convexity of her tremulous cheeks, forming a safety-valve of terrific power to her distended lungs. The aged traveller was a fine, robust specimen of humanity: he made some few enquiries, which satisfied himself of the truth of the lad's statement respecting his kindred and connection, and he relieved the sufferer by declaring that "he would see him franked to his destination." Having said this, and more than this of equal comfort, he stooped down, dived into the wicker-work of a comely house-keeper's basket, demolished a satisfactory meat pie, and leaned silently to his own corner, conning reverentially a thick gilt-leaved volume, the pages

of which were divided by the golden tasselled ribbons of an embroidered "register." "The priest and his office-book!" we thought to each other, and instantly we were in Birmingham.

Shall we describe the view of Birmingham? No! few travellers but have formed acquaintance with the gloomy emporium. If you have not seen Birmingham, and you have no immediate business there, and you wish to possess a mere idea of the place, select a large kitchen with an incurable smoky chimney. When the wind is in the "wrong quarter," cover the floor with a multitude of bricks, with here and there "an extinguisher" intervening



Near Birmingham.

—here and there a pepper-box. Shut the door, and look through the key-hole when the smoke is predominant. You will have taken a bird's-eye view of Birmingham.

Passing from one train to the other (there was small leisure for delay), we crossed over the streets of a disorderly suburb, and sought refuge at the Birmingham station for the Derby line, and engaged places to the town and burgh of Tamworth, distant (by the former road through Sutton Coldfield) about fourteen miles. For this distance we were fated to be united unto strange company, viz. a withered housekeeper, who had been to consult the "Dudley Devil" (a fortune-teller) about some linen and plate stolen from a relative in her own neighbourhood of Kingsbury; a Quaker corn-dealer, who said nothing; a jaundiced old fellow, with eyes staring like those of a skinned hawk, who said nothing *but* nothings; and a gorgeous young dame in cowslip satin, with bonnet of the same, and a "lancer's feather" tipped with faded

pink. Now this young dame we happened to have known in earlier days, when we ordered our whiskey by the black bottle (solus), and furnished our bachelor closet with pints of purest Stout. She was the daughter of an ignorant fellow who had made a fortune as a liquor merchant, and whose only female child inherited, by will and testament, the sum of twenty thousand pounds! Our fellow companion, the masculine, exhausted, by monosyllabic eloquence, the sun, the absence of rain, the leaves, the last winter, and the inconvenience of great coats. As a specimen of his oratory, he showed "that the dry weather was entirely owing to the want of moisture," "that travelling gents who were fond of caps seldom wore hats;" and that "he rather thought (by reference to his hunting-watch) that we should get to Tamworth in the usual time." We declined all interference with the peculiar opinions of such an instructive personage, and we abandoned him to the awful narrations of the "witch-finder," and the loquacities of the Brummagem heiress.

" She's a heiress, that's clear,
For her father sells beer,
And lives at the sign of the Cow and the Snuffers."

Old Ballad.

She was going to consult the physician at Tamworth (the family friend) about a domestic affliction. In further conversation, "she had made up her mind, fayther or no fayther, to go to Caper the dancing-master's next animal ball! (Upon shopping affairs): The draper told her "that flannels was seduced because the linens were up." And upon literature, in return to a query by him of the spectral eyes, "She never read nothin, with any pleasure, but Coot's voyage, and a funny book called 'Shindrum Shandrum' (Tristram Shandy?)." The drab-coloured petrification melted under this blaze of "orthography," and joined us well in the laugh, which, with other plea for amusement, we enjoyed amazingly at her expense. Such were the "facetiæ" of our speedy journey, which kept us not long from a desirable change, and from the rest which began to appear, like a greedy hope, at the termination of our onward path.

The "station" at TAMWORTH is some distance from the town, and thence you command (from its elevated position) a clear view of the home of the Saxon and the Norman chief—the scene of warlike bustlings and festal cavalcades in other periods; a very tranquil borough now, and of as slow life as well may be. The prospect here is widely different from the surface of nature in the district of South Staffordshire, devoted to mining operations, and previously described. Bold and striking outlines are less

frequent, though many picturesque uplands rise between Tamworth and Lichfield, to the north-west; but you gaze around refreshed with gathering beauties, and the eye finds congenial repose in the old dwellings of English people, who walk the arable and pasture of their forefathers (the gentle and the simple) with good remembrances, and sit by their wood fires, and carve their wife-manufacture of bread and Warwickshire cheese, and wear their stout sinews into the unravelled cordage of sexagenarian endurance, and then go to rest as quietly to the shadowy enclosure of the village cemetery, as doth the wearied child, who, with its little hands filled with crushed wild flowers, sleeps, breathing hope to its mother, upon her kindly knees.

Entering the town by the Gungate are the Free School (said to be founded by Queen Elizabeth) and the hospital or almshouses, erected and endowed by Guy the bookseller, who was a native of the borough, and possessed much property hereabouts. These are unworthy of description, the latter building having been much repaired. The Town Hall, erected also by the same worthy in his lifetime, is an ordinary structure, the colonnade beneath the main apartment (the assembly room) forming a market shelter to the country people. We seldom upon such excursions patronise the "hotel" of commercial travellers, or the evening haunt of grey-wigged shopkeepers (at the "opposition concern") in a small town. We invariably seek an inn, where mutton chops, eggs, and table beer can be produced at the snapping of your thumb and finger. The anticipations of a half-roasted chicken, or a dish of gruelly potatoes, is annoying, and prevents you reading the "Pigot's Directory" entirely through whilst your dinner is in preparation. Captivated therefore by an enormous "fleur de lys," banded with an inscription setting forth that such was "the arms of the burgh of Tamworth," we introduced ourselves to a decent person, whom we could call "Missis" with impunity, and gave directions for our frugal repast, whilst we skipped over the streets to visit the sexton of the church and the wardens of the castle. The sexton, a very comely man, rejoicing in the familiar monosyllable "Jones," was sipping his domestic luxury in the golden afternoon, radiant with facial lustre from a dazzling western light flooding through the casement, travelling over the tea-board, and leaping with splashes of rollicking glory from a long snouted Tutania tea-pot and an empty bread and butter plate—mindful, too, of a visit to an impudent clock face, and sundry irons and brasses, illustrative of housewifery purity, and ranged with becoming method at the chimney nook. Mr. Jones had just bolted (after superstitious inspection) a huge "sweetheart" bobbing about seducingly in the finishing draught of his tea, and with courteous submission he beckoned us to the door, garnished, by-

the-by, with certain iron bracelets, linked garters, and bludgeons, which denoted the office and habitation of town constable.

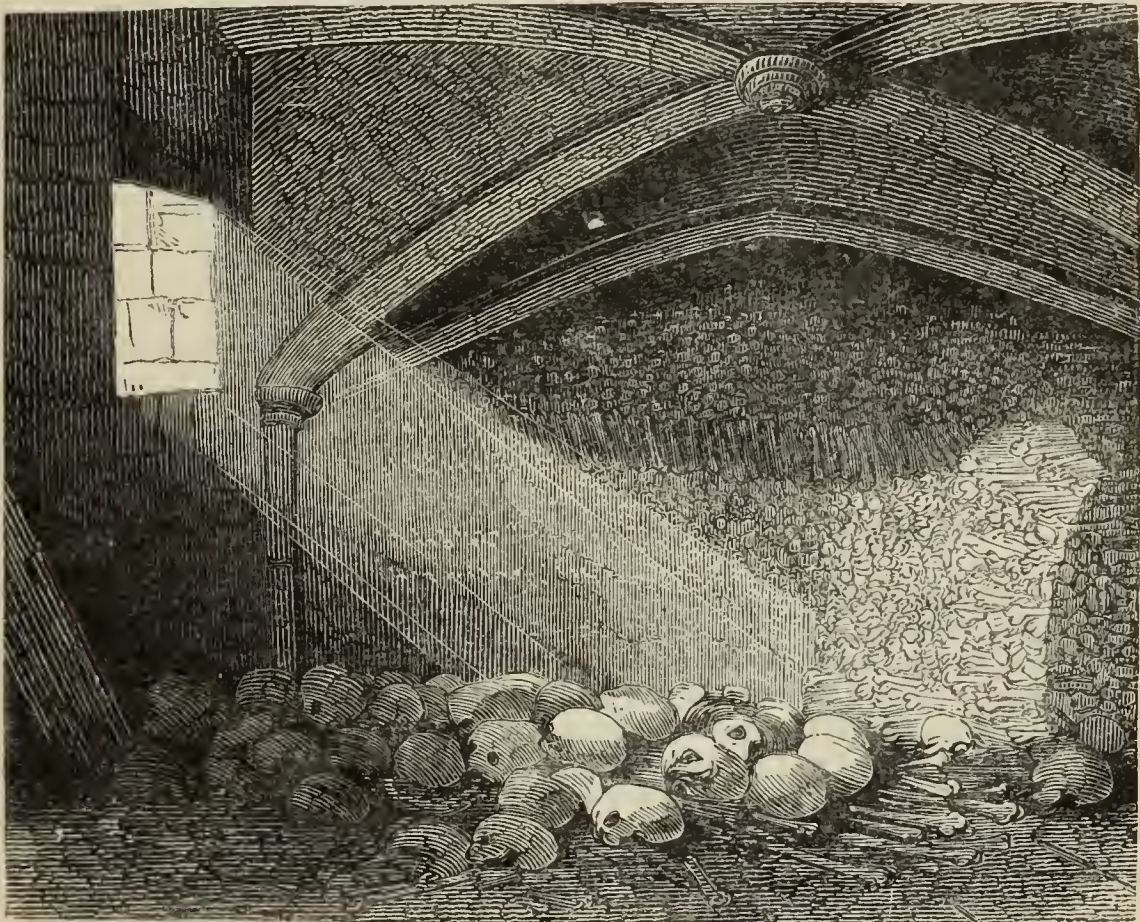
The Church, dedicated to St. Editha, is a venerable structure, and the *tout ensemble* would lead you to expect a treasury of interesting monuments. The old dense walls to the east of the church, the sombre casements of the edifice, the time-worn channels of the moulding aloft, imbue the visitor with much anticipation. Alack-a-day, if you read Dugdale to-night, and look for the legendary glass, the expressive effigies, and the promised detail upon the morrow, you will be grievously out of humour with yourself and with every thing around you — the mutilated architectural arrangements, and the vanishing memorials. The fine tower of the church has four spires, and a staircase of curious construction, consisting of a double cochlea, one surmounting the other, at each ascent around the axis, and communicating with separate stories. This arrangement was made for the service of the lay people and the subclerics, in constant duty here formerly, and to prevent collision in the narrow space.

“There is not such another,” said the sexton, “in the whole country, only in Germany somewhere, and I can’t remember where.” Something of the kind exists, I believe, at Canonbury Tower; and with frequent repetition upon the Continent. In the nave of the church there is a finely cast arch of the Gothic kind. This church has transepts not projecting beyond the aisles, a north porch, and a clerestory. Between the chancel and transepts are Saxon arches, and Gothic arches between the chancel and northern aisle. The tower is in the decorative Gothic style; the rest of the building of a later manner. The tombs in the chancel and between the chancel and north aisle are much mutilated and worn. The remains of the Marmion race, the Frevilles, and the Ferrers, mouldered here. The brasses in this church are numerous, but are so illegible as scarcely to repay investigation. There is a tessellated pavement within the communion space of the early clerical period. We noticed the rich tints of some ancient glass in the eastern window. Nothing here of earlier date remains uninjured by time, whitewash, or the *soi-disant* “reviver,” only a mural monument in the chancel to one of the Ferrers, with figures sculptured in Roman costume, and with other bold decorations. Amongst the families of consideration who placed remembrances of pristine glory here, we read the names of the Comberfords, the Repyngtons, Bretons, and Swinfens. There was a religious house upon the foundation of this church as early as can be noted; but this endured no length of time; and the subsequent collegiate building, with its adjoining chapelries, existed at the Reformation, with much

beauty and endowment. A statue of St. Editha (of whom more anon), within the walls, was much venerated by the townspeople of those former days. Hear the chronicle.

Over y^e riuer brode y^e pylgrymmes onwerde spede
 Bye olden Tamewerde's alters fayre forre ghostlie goode toe spede.
 Soundethe y^e cherche bells merrilie, adoune y^e loftye aysle
 Thro' tincturede shaypes of saynctes ande kynges, y^e shaftede sonnebemes smile,
 Standethe y^e marbyl offe **Sayncte Edythe**, alle inne bryghte arraie.
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus, everich one dothe saie.
 Gentyls from broyder'd sendal scryp scattereth pense arounde,
 Toe symple men, wyth dustede fete, wepynge upon y^e grounde.

“You will see the crypt?” enquired the guide. “Certainly,” we answered, and were conducted to a space at the south-western end of the interior, where we descended by a trap-door a few break-neck stone stairs to the vaulted room in question. The light peers into the solemn space by a narrow window half buried in earth and wall, upon a mound, or rather a stack, of human bones. The effect is striking. The beaming rays from the world of



Crypt of Tamworth Church.

quick mortality above fall upon the relics of the unremembered, unrecognised ancestry of the Tamworth generation; and the reflection, which in itself is but akin to the "darkness visible," is set into the bosom of an utter gloom absorbing the background of the melancholy picture. We could, after awhile, trace the ribs of the groined roof overhead, and perceive that the proportions of the same told of its considerable extent beyond our restricted ken.

"Do you know any person who of late years explored the extent by passing along the bony floor between that and the roof of the vault?" we enquired.

"Yes," said the sexton; "when I was a schoolboy I once made the attempt; others have ascertained that the lofty heap of bones is continued to the depth of fourteen yards. The sons of Dr. Palmer, of Birmingham, in making search after the curiosities of our church, passed by torch-light to the extreme part, and they copied an odd inscription which they found upon the furthest wall. I heard that it was a puzzle to them, and that's all I know about it! There goes a tale that many of the bones came from a field near to the town, long whiles ago, and were supposed, then, to have been the remains of men slaughtered in a battle with some heathens a deuce of a while before our time, gentlemen! Some are from the churchyard—most of them in fact; and there are some, no doubt, which have been removed from the floor of the church in making our improvements."*

"Thank you for your information," we replied to Mr. Jones.

"Now," said the Pencil, "here is my own sketch; it will require a few lines—so much the better in rhyme than in ordinary prose: lean your elbow upon a Freville's sconce, or a Marmion's may be, and strike off, whilst I *shade* in the effect."

Lines written in the Crypt of Tamworth Church.

A VOICE for the silent dead, who sleep in the shade of the ancient pile —
 The vanquish'd Dane, the Mercian Thane, and the nun of Edith's aisle;
 The baron who held the Norman sword, the dame with gentler brow,
 Once sculptur'd fair in chancel rare, and mutilated now.
 Far in the gloom their skulls appear, and their faintly glimmering teeth,
 Uprear'd with laugh and cheerful song the dismal crypt beneath.
 For here the sexton whirl'd the spade, and earroll'd the wonted rhyme,
 Hurling his playmates, one by one, to the things of olden time.
 Under the ground dim arches twine their Gothic ribs of stone,
 And a timid light falls tremblingly upon walls of human bone.

* I have since heard there were signs of a crypt altar at the extremity of the vault. The gentlemen herein mentioned have published results of their investigation. — F. T. P.

The sweet cool rays from a living world through the hollow'd window peep,
 And the chime, the knell of the turret bell lulls every ghost to sleep ;
 Welcoming some to the bridal porch, some to a drearier way,
 What would the dead men give to see one other yesterday ;
 This is a goodly studying place — let us awhile unfold
 The blazon'd serolls and parchment rolls, and histories brown and old ;
 We'll read of kings who flourish'd here, of hoary saints who died,
 Of feudal knaves who deck'd their slaves in panoply of pride.
 What strife and bloodshed have we here “ in fields of gallant fight ? ”
 And who was up ? and who was down ? who was for wrong or right ?
 What was the motive — lucre — love — or honour — or pretence ?
 Where did they die — in field or flood — in crime or innocence ?
 Ah ! 'tis the old, old history — fools, warriors, priests, and kings —
 Usurpers bold — the greedy gold, and all such hurtful things.
 These records of the dead conceal a depth of woe and fear,
 They flatter power and its golden hour, little of deathbeds here !
 Some liv'd, some died, some rul'd, they say — fine chronicles, forsooth !
 Arise, and speak, ye wither'd bones, and end the tale in truth,
 Oh ! a voice for the silent dead ; if such their latest thoughts could tell,
 We should never love the world again, that now we love so well.

We ascended once again to the nourishing breezes of the unshrouded sky ; but the faint charnel odour clung to our garments, and reminded us of the relics of the blessed and the unblessed we had left behind. We did not forget the sexton, who exhibited the triumphs of his brethren of the spade to us, and we slipped the accustomed dole into his honest hand, wishing that we might not have a less portly “ bed-maker.” One might be sure of obtaining his allowance of the parson's land, measured by an excavation capable of containing friend Jones and his comely figure.

As our time was brief, and evening came upon us speedily, we hastened to the bridge at the Fazely end of the town, to view the exterior of the Castle, which is a lofty, huge, round structure, somewhat after the manner of the old castle of Leyden, shown in an existing print. A square projection, in low relief, is imposed upon the perpendicular wall of the circle, and contains several smaller rooms, and the transomed bay windows of chief apartments. It is surrounded by trees, by a wall, and is flanked by the rear of the edifices in the main street. It is the property of the Townshends.*

A celebrated auctioneer attempted to possess the building upon the strength of mortgage, but with a point of law he was defeated. He was the last person who attacked the fortress ! The river Tame, after speeding to the north of Birmingham, takes a direct course eastward, gains the

* It has since been furnished and tenanted by a gentlewoman of the neighbourhood, and admission is not easily to be procured.

central upward line of the north county, Warwickshire, and washes the banks of Tamworth Castle mound, proceeding thence in the same northern line, with Comberford upon the right. The river Anker rises between Hastings, Wulvershill, and Sherford, east of the straight line of the river Tame, and proceeds northwest, with Nun-Eaton, Atherston, Merivale, and Poolley upon the left bank, to Tamworth, where it inosculates with the Tame. Tamworth Castle is in Warwickshire, at the conflux of these rivers, where rich meadows abound, and waters reflecting the poplar and the willow tree, and a sky worthy of the broad waters beneath. The entrance to the town, over the arches of the elegant bridge, with the ancient walls to the outer view, and the plashy water-mill, and gardens of villa residences upon either side, is exceedingly charming in the early summer time; and when we were last there, the broad stream was dazzling with the slanting fall of evening sunbeams; a tribe of reckless schoolboys were wading to and fro, gathering rushes from the islets of the fair-bosomed Tame: and it was such a scene as pilgrims lonely would sigh to leave for the dusty road and uncivil mates; for the uninteresting, smoking, manufacturing town, or the benighted sojourn upon the dark blue wilderness of the cold heath. The town is of Saxon origin.

Robert Marmion, at the Conquest, received the fortress from William of Normandy. An ancient window of the old church represented the grant of the castle to this worthy, as is to be seen in the copy of the same, to be found in "Master Dugdale's History of Warwickshire."

Robert Fitz Robert Marmion is recorded as having received a grant of free warren from the king, Henry I., at Cannock. In the eighth year of King Stephen, during those cruel civil wars, when, as an impartial historian observes, "never did England, since the invasion of the Danes, present such a scene of misery," this Robert Fitz Robert expelled the monks from their religious home at Coventry, and made a fortress of the sacred structure. Hence sallying imprudently forth to harass the Earl of Chester, who beleaguered his camp, he fell into a deep trench, and received such injury that he died miserably.

One Phil. Marmion adhered to Henry III. in his public afflictions, and was afterwards rewarded with the government of Kenilworth Castle. The estate passed consecutively, as you may perceive by threading the full pedigree, from the Marmions to the Frevilles, and then to the Barons de Ferrariis or Ferrers, so called probably from some sinecure connected with the duty of mareschall, and superintendent, of course, of the "smiths" of cavalry. We were much amused on entering the stone gate, adorned at

the foot of the arch with the "Norman horse-shoes," to listen to the injunctions of the small, smoke-dried female warder, who ushered us to the right path.

"You wishes to see the castle, do you? Now, you take care, both of you, as they takes you on the top of the tower; sometimes they don't; but mind me, you take care as you make 'em!"

"Some additional fee!" we whispered to each other; "the warders are in alliance, as is usual with such people."

The evening rays came with blinding shaft through the tall trees of the rookery, as we mounted the steep path to the townward warden. The older birds had screamed themselves hoarse, and were blinking with joy for the forthcoming twilight, all save one "Young Englander," upon the tuft of a venerable scabbed elm, who kept up a naughty cawing to his grandmamas and grandsires in an undutiful way. We set him down as the junior D'Israeli of the community. Arriving at the upper lodge, we found that the old crone and her limping husband were in preparation for the dormitory. "Indeed," she exclaimed, "she had salved his poor limb, and he was just a-goin to shut the castle doors."

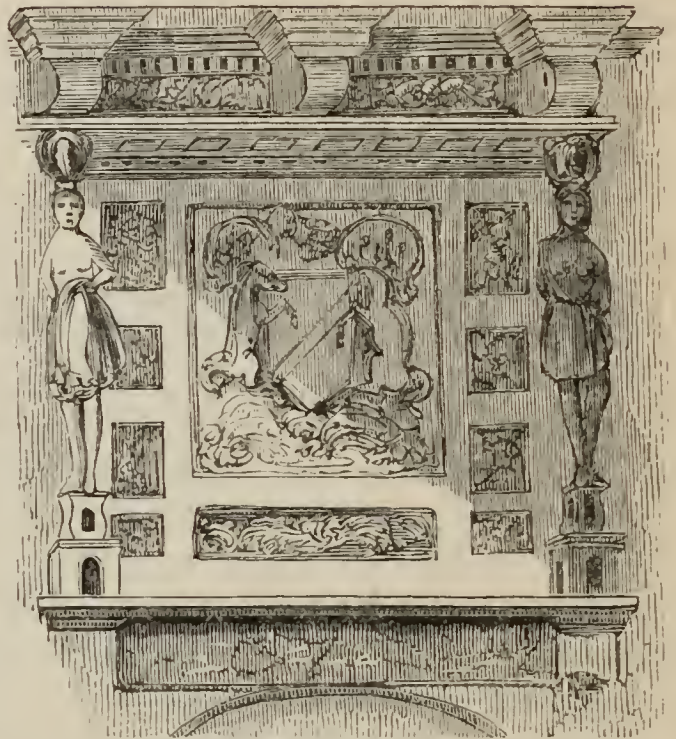
At such an early hour, with the bold sparkling disk of the westering orb upon their humble casement, the appetite for snoozing must have been wonderful, and could only be accounted for by supposing the influence of a sympathy linking them indescribably to the nested rooks, and to their habits of "rising with the lark and lying down with the lamb."

It is well to be taught by God's simpler creatures, when, with the evil ways of intellectual human beings, we should learn habits less salutary for the body and for the soul.

With cheerful words and eulogy of his imperceptible infirmities, we lured the old fellow to accompany us with the keys, and we rambled at will from room to room, and from staircase to landing, over the wide interior. The central part of the building is of great antiquity, particularly the hall, which, in the eye of the antiquary, is speedily rife with its company and arrangements in prouder days. Most of the other rooms bear signs of having been recently occupied by persons under considerable obligations to the paper-hangers and carpenters of the town, who have sedulously concealed many features of the work of their predecessors. The state rooms are noble even in their desolation; and the deep bay windows, carved chimney-pieces, and adorned panellings, of the Stuart period, are in excellent style. Both apartments are adorned cornice-wise aloft, with painted and gilded compartments, rich with the heraldry of the Gresleys, the Hydes, the Eyres,

&c. &c., in addition to the arms of the first stock of the nobility gifted with the estate.

One fireplace is surrounded with sumptuous black oaken carving, highly polished. There is a series of mouldings, cornices, and brackets of the later sixteenth century; and upon a spacious projecting tablet, admirably supported by fantastic work and human figures and Corinthian pillars, is a shield of arms, Marmion quartered with the succeeding generations. The other fireplace is surmounted by panellings, repeating a genealogical stem and its branches. The view from the rampart of the castle is a treat that we



Fireplace, Tamworth Castle.

would have enjoyed until “the coming of the bat,” but the grey warder leaned hard upon his lame leg, and looked piteously for our fee and our speedy exit, and we obliged him, considering our unseasonable postponement of his balmy slumber.

Returning to our inn of the “Fleur de Lys,” we hasted well with the cleanly allowance provided, and listened to the droll conversation of a little barber, who was discussing his mug intrusively in our private quarters, but who for information’s sake remained sedentary at our earnest bidding. He told us the history of every chair and table in the parlour, the nocturnal tenants of each snug corner, and amused us exceedingly by describing the eccentricities of a gentleman from Amington, who often smoked a weak charge of tobacco, and quaffed a slender pottle there.

“Every body here,” said he, “knows old —. He sits down in yonder chair on a market day, and works his arithmetic with a rusty nail upon the japan, which grease and age have conferred upon his velveteen breeches’ knee. Some time ago his wife died, and they buried her in the vicinity of the farm; the widower was supplied by the undertaker with the funeral crape and cloak, and requested to proceed to the mourning-coach provided.

“‘No, no,’ he answered; ‘you are all going the length of my own land, so ride on, and I’ll meet you, my friends, up at the churchyard, and I can do

a bit o' shepperding the while.' This would not do for the very proper and better-behaved kindred who had met to the solemnity, and upon their entreaty he entered the vehicle, sat down with a familiar bump, rubbed his hands together, and surveyed the boundaries of the space. 'Well, bless me,' he said, 'if this ay'nt as snug as a house!'" Many other tales he related of the same person, finishing the recital when we shouldered scrip and reached down our trusty staves for the conclusion of our day's excursion. Then he ventured a surprise that we had not been to see the monument in the churchyard to the memory of six unfortunates, burnt to death recently at the conflagration of a large inn at Tamworth. He proffered, also, an introduction to a chum of his, a hair-cutter in the main street, who had "a many old carvings from old places, and a deal of furniture of old ancient times, besides some old money in an old box, amongst which he had seen a Queen Anne's farthing, a halfpenny of George II., and a real widow's mite." We wished the loquacious barber "good evening," and proceeded over the Bole Bridge towards Shuttington.

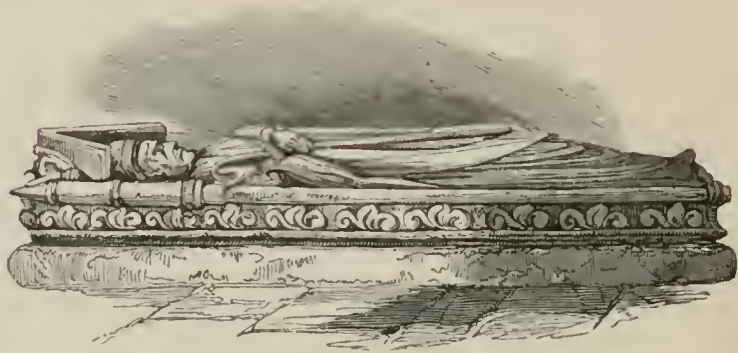
"I have heard," said my companion, "of a savage combat between two knights for the favour of a fair lady, which took place in early times, somewhere to the east of the town."

"Yes," I replied, pointing over the beds of brown osier in the stream, "yonder, in those wide meadow lands, near to the castle bridge. The story is popular. Formerly, on the stucco of the great hall at the fortress, were pictures of two giants (as they were called) in fresco, namely, Sir Launcelot du Lake and Sir Tarquin, knights of the Round Table. These were not understood by the vulgar, and the work of their imagination was the favourite legend. The story clings to the field, but the picture has been destroyed, and the ancient armour, within the last few years, has vanished unaccountably from the armoury. It was sold for a trifle to persons of the vicinity."

"Was the Guy who erected the town hall in 1701, the same with the founder of the hospital in Southwark?"

"The same," I answered; "he represented the town in seven parliaments. In 1678 he endowed almshouses which he had erected for fourteen poor men and women, upon a spot of land formerly occupied by the brethren of the 'gild of St. James,' previous to the 'suppression.' He made his fortune by a protection, or monopoly, for the sale of Bibles, and by the purchase of seamen's tickets — a very profitable speculation for men of capital during the wars of the time. You remember the story of his courtship to his pretty housekeeper. When he was an old bachelor, he had fixed the day for his

marriage. Awakened in the early morning by a noise at the door, he hastened down, and found a mason mending the broken steps of the threshold. ‘Softly, man!’ spoke Mr. Guy; ‘by whose order is this confusion?’ ‘By the Missises,’ said the operative in the brown paper head-piece. ‘Here is a crown for you,’ said the master; ‘go; there is no mistress here, nor ever will be!’ and he kept his word — the better for many an unfortunate victim of disease, restored to a happy family by the skill and attention of the medical men and matrons of his magnificently endowed hospital.”



CHAPTER IV.

WORTHIDGE. — AMINGTON.—ITS LEGENDS. — A SUNSET. — THE NIGHT
SPENT AT A KINSMAN'S HOMESTEAD. — A MORNING'S JOURNEY TO
ALVECOTR. — PRESENT ASPECT OF THE PRIORY. — THE LEGEND OF
ITS ORIGIN.

POOLLEY. — POLESWORTH. — THE COCKAYNES. — POOLLEY HALL. — ITS
LEGEND. — THE HERMITAGE.



CHAPTER IV.



WE now turned our backs upon the most ancient town in the county—the “Tame Waërt,” or “Worthidge,” the water farm of the Saxon, the seat of government, and the royal residence under Offa, Cenwulf, Beornwulf, and others. It is now a tranquil borough, celebrated for a fabric of cottons, laces, and tapes. It still gives the title of Viscount to Earl Ferrars. The old ballad drollery of the “King and the Tanner of Tamworth” is familiar to most persons, and men of that calling yet abound.

Soon after you leave the bridge nearest to the railway line, you fall into a pleasant rural highway, with abundance of calm interesting scenery around you; and thus we talked of the orchards, the bosky lanes, and the shy cottages, until we reached the village green at Amington, about a mile and a half distant from Bole Hall. Here we rested to scan the circle of lonesome clean structures, which, like a thoughtful family in council, lean over the space, with boundaries of laburnum in the front of the porch, and lines of venerable box, and quaint figures of clipped yew, which really looked like periwigged beaux and hooped maidens—vegetable ghosts waiting for the rehearsal of the minuets of the past century.

A few years since a ruined wall, the western entrance of the antiquated prebendal chapel, reared its grey form to picturesque advantage in this open “green,” having the tomb of “Master Repyngton” (railed in) near to the foundation. A chapel was required, and a sapient somebody hemmed the tall gable with its open arched bell turret between another west end and an eastern morsel of would-be-Norman mason-work; and the horrid “sandwich” of stone now drives the visitant of other days with painful speed from the contemplation of its distress.

“Anything of Amington, by the way?” said the Pencil.

“In the 31st of Henry III., Thomas de Clinton, of Amington, levied a fine to Philip Marmion, ‘that he and his heirs, his wife and their heirs, might, when they came to Tamworth, or to their Castle of Middleton, fish with his boat any where in his water at Amington, with one net called ‘flea

net,' and a 'tramil' and 'sayna*,' for which liberty he gave him six marks of silver.' (In the time of Henry the First the silver mark was valued about 6s. 1*d.*) There is a legend attached to the tomb of 'Repyngton.' He is said to have died in foreign land, and to have been brought to the family cemetery for sepulture. 'The reason why he went abroad (say the Humphry and Rogers of the district) was this — he was a darned hot-tempered squire, and he run his servant man through with a sword, because as he blabbed of a bit of a secret about a young ooman in the parish: some go so near as to say it was because the fellow didn't serve the master with his hot water and razors time enough on an Easter Sunday morning; so he cut off to France, and the man died, and *he* died.' Another version is, that he pretended to die soon after his absence from home, and a coffin full of stones was brought to the present tomb." This has nothing to do with the ghost of the servant, which haunted the old hall, and moaned at the larder door on cold wintry nights, and walked about in a bloody suit of livery, every waning of the moon from Michaelmas Day to the Feast of St. John the Baptist inclusively.

"I have noticed," said my brother pilgrim, "a raised causeway of flat stones upon the right hand as you travel a mile towards Amington, and thence as we now proceed upon the left hand."

"The country here is subject to frequent inundation," I replied, "though an opinion prevails amongst the peasantry, that such was constructed by the direction of the monks and clergy of Catholic times, so that in miry seasons they might interchange civilities — the clerks of Tamworth, the curate of the prebendary of Amington, and the brothers of Alvecote Priory — with each other. It is called the Priests' Walk."

The red sun lingered over a narrow lake of saffron flood, in the purpling e gion of the western sky. We turned with reverence to watch its glorious departure. The bright hues of the landscape faded away, and it became wide and sombre forest ground — the sanctuary of wearied rooks. Willow trees bent low at the feet of faintly-illuminated beds of upland, and pale streaky lines of running water were amongst the trees, widening towards a dusky foreground of village lanes and habitations. Through the etching of innumerable boughs, traced between our view and the sanguine orb, we could perceptibly measure its downward speed; a sweet bird sang upon a whispering maple tree, and withdrew our attention; when the song was hushed, and the bird was embosomed in its mossy home, we turned again to the west, and the sun and the day were going to another hemisphere, and to a world of

* *Sagena*, a drag-net, (Lat.).

awakened thoughts. Our path was now dull and lonely; we might only see the deeper shadows of the woods and hedge-rows, and hear the grating cackle of the corndrake in the adjoining fields.

Crossing the Anker at the foot of Shuttington Hill, we ascended, guided by the white walls of the welcome farm of our Warwickshire kinsman, and soon expecting ears found promise of arrival; the children cried aloud in recognition of the guest; and, from the opening door, a blaze of light from the capacious kitchen rushed across the rustic hall. First of the throng came forward, honestly and hospitably, the stalwart host, and a hearty good welcoming we made of it in truth! How we passed the remainder of the evening it boots to tell—in friendly cups, with friendly words, in such laughter as the wearied seldom use, and in songs and jocund rounds dear to our very grandfathers; and when we retired to our chambers, it was solely under the influence of a grave thought of the wide circuit intended for the succeeding day. The young people retired earlier, for the corporal investment of the juvenile race is less obedient to the vagaries of the random spirit. “We are such stuff as dreams are made of.” Their blank evening features seem to utter—“Their little life is rounded with a sleep.” At six of the next morning our industrious host was ranging the lower premises; and the lowing of cattle, the beseeching hunger of swine, and the hiccups of the methodistical guinea-fowls apprised us that the farm was already “wide awake.” The good man, our relative, practised “The Pointes of Husbandrie set foorth by Thomas Tusser, Gentleman:”—

*Get up in the morning as soone as thou wilt,
With oberlong slugging, good seruant is spilt;
Some slouens from sleeping no sooner get up,
But hand is in ambrie, and nose in the cup.*

We who have been reviewing the pages of a “Francis Moore” for the year 1811 (appointed as shaving paper), followed the brave example, so soon as we had finished the prophecy for May, thirty-three years gone by, viz. “The Frenchmen and Germans are marching! The Hollanders are not quite satisfied! The Turks are making great preparations! The Italian princes are in a flurry!”—and so were we—princes of nature, with staff and wallet to be attended to—our sceptre and treasury. Our toilet was completed, with one inconvenience only. The chamber we slept in had a single bed, and this occupied the small neat room so absolutely, that we were obliged to throw up the window to gain the necessary fling for pulling on our boots. At breakfast table we found our “bonus vir de campis” circled by his handsome children; and with our modicum of refreshment we received the lesson of

his experience for our conduct during the day,—“Delays are dangerous.” We sallied forth.

“Now,” said my companion, “I am more than ever at your bidding; for here you have fluent intimacy with the persons and the places around. Whither, first, do we wander?”

“Down the steep hill of fields,” I replied, “and over the long bridge of the wide Anker; then to the side road leading to the canal, which lies in parallel course with the river towards the village of Polesworth, about three miles distant.”

“Then onward, whilst the breeze is cool and cheerful spirits plead for exercise,” he answered.

Close to the side of the canal, in the commencement of this track, is the residence of Mr. Samuel Roby, the tenant of a large farm, and a gentleman of much farming speculation. The house has a romantic appearance from the water-side—the grey ivied stone walls, the sombre gabled roof, the transomed windows, appearing solemnly through the dense foliage of the towering and of the bending trees, which lave their skirts in the reflecting stream. This is Aucote or Alvecote Priory, of the “Itinerary.” Here (formerly) was a Benedictine cell, built in the year 1159, by William Burdett. Rents, at the Reformation, were 28*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.*? It was granted, 34 Henry VIII., to Thomas Lord Audley and Sir Thomas Pope. Thus says the common-place: we shall inquire further.

The family received us courteously in their venerable and capacious parlour, hung round with excellent pictures in Flemish costume, and with the more interesting portraits of a later generation, distinguished persons of general historical fame, and the ancestry of the residents, who come of gentle blood, by grandsires of Leicestershire notoriety. Mrs. Roby condescended to point out those portions of the building of most interest to us. The foundation of the Priory is in the existing mansion, and it is most probable that the grey lichen-covered blocks of the present structure are, many of them, portions of the religious institute. The vaults are original, and present huge recesses and occasional fireplaces; and the ale and beer of the modern tenant occupy the seat of the sack and mead of the bygone cellarage, and the dominion of the forgotten steward of the men of Malvern. There are worthy traces of early architecture in sundry quarters of the edifice; but the most worthy is the subject of the sketch, a veritable fragment of Aucote Priory. It stands in the garden at the wing of the dwelling; and our friend of the hall assured us that, frequently, they had dug up human bones near to the ruins, from soil which evidently was part of the place of sepulture. The fish-ponds or

stews are to be traced in the low field over the boundary edge of the canal, opposite to the mansion. The dovecote flourishes, and has always flourished here.

The men of seclusion, as we learn from abundant memoirs, were very much attached to domestic creatures, and even to wilder nature. "The abbot John," says Sophronius, "was so filled with charity (universal kindness), that, residing eighty years in his monastery, he was used to feed the dogs daily, to carry corn to the ants, and food unto the little birds upon the roof."

The name of the place is formed from no unusual blending:—*Avis*, Latin; *Cote*, Saxon — as if "Bird-Home." The *u* which has fallen into Aucote is easily accounted for.

"Now, my dear companion, for your kindness in following me hither, hear the legend:— 'Sir Thomas Burdett left wife and kindred, and went to fight the heathen in the Holy Land. Many long years, and no tidings came to his English dwelling; and the old grey-eyed steward, who fattened upon the estate, became an ulcer full of evil thoughts towards the matron, whose beauty was a theme for vulgar pity, and the source of kind prayers for the warrior of God, then far beyond the sea. Shame descended, like a hurricane of fire, upon the wicked servant, for he whispered to the chaste lady words that, to *think of*, are very wicked and cruel indeed. The Christians, beneath the sun of Syria, held contention with each other rather than with their turbaned foe; and, when affairs waned slowly to the dire catastrophe of utter defeat, Burdett came home a proud, sad man. The wife of his soul would have healed his care, but first the wicked steward met his lord, and said false things that blighted her forward innocence. She rushed forth with the madness of love to greet him. Her husband smote her down, even with the heavy sword; and alas! her white arm fell dissevered from the body to the ground. The steward fled; before sunset he was in death, beneath the rushy waters of the winding river; the truth was known; and Burdett, in



Alvecote Priory.

his agony and penitence, made a pious, tearful vow, that he would make his poor atonement in outward act, by building this monastery of Aucote : and his vow was accomplished.”

“It is a pitiful story, and thank you for your favour,” responded my friend.

“Mr Roby, junior, offers to make the trio of the excursion : let us wander on to our next scene of romance at Poolley Hall.”



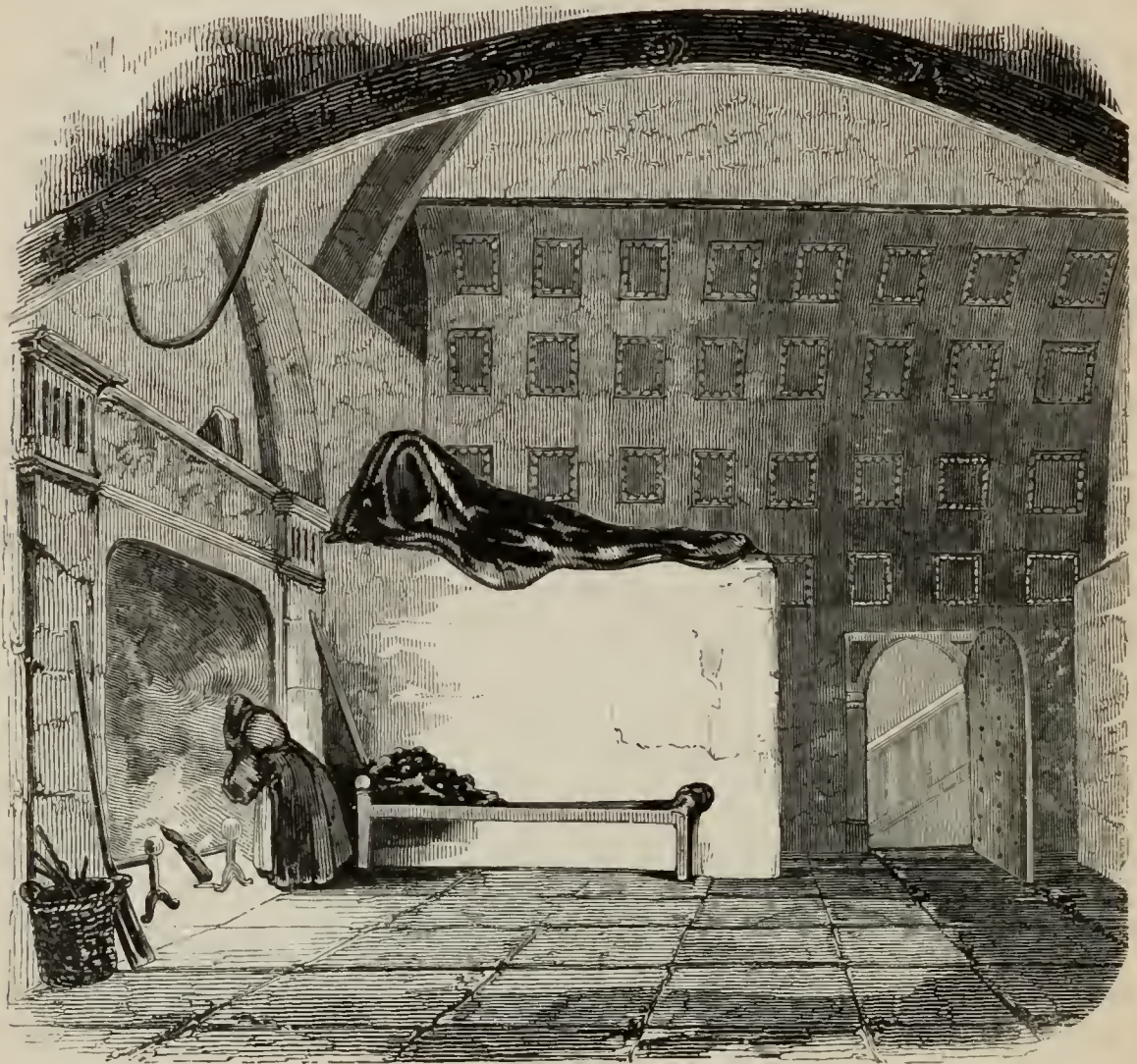
Poolley Hall.

POOLLEY is about three quarters of a mile from the place of our last visitation, whither we intended to return for other scrutiny upon the morrow. It stood formerly upon a steep, rising from the shadowed deep stream of the river Anker. The intervening canal, a fine line of water, is now its nearer boundary. It rises with a feudal air from the commanding shore, and is an extensive castellated mansion, with a farm attached, the older residence and its embattled walls bearing character of having been constructed in the

sixteenth century. Crossing the river, we entered through the rear into the garden, where we greeted the lady of the Hall, who behaved to us with singular courtesy. The ivy-enshrouded chapel, which you perceive to the left of the place as you regard it from the water, is remarkably pretty. There is a tower attached to the north-western angle, which communicates with the sanctuary floor, with a "quondam" gallery, and with the roof. The triple arched altar window is defiled with close masonry; there is a quatrefoiled window in the southern wall. The west entrance is by an obtuse arch, abruptly pointed at the centre. As at Aucote, Mistress Tibbets informed us that in laying out for the *asparagus-bed* many human bones were discovered near to the holy walls. The interior of the main building, with the exception of an apartment roofed with heavy cross timbers, is scarcely worthy of the note-book. The brick tower is in bad condition, and uninviting to any one but juvenile candidates for eggs or young sparrows upon the bruised moulding of the summit. To the river the Hall presents a long, irregular frontispiece. The most handsome portion is an oblong, perpendicular, square projection, and contains spacious mullioned windows, in stories of two succeeding bays. Adjoining this, and retiring from the chapel end, is a cumbrous flat, replete with irregular spouting, sullen buttresses, and ancient casements and crannies: this itself is connected by a well embattled wall, trimmed with stone dressings, to a quoined brick tower of attitude and defensive might, when such aids were required by the slashed and rapier'd proprietors of the Stuart era. From the garden terrace you enjoy a charming view of the time-honoured village of POLESWORTH, situated over the river, at a short distance, lying as it were in the bend of the water to the south-east. Beneath, and through the bloom of branching hawthorn trees and orchard stems, you see the double line of reflecting waves; the canal shadowed by its picturesque boundaries; and the Anker lying deeper in the weedy vale, with its accompanying ranks of hazel, and pollard, and stunted alder trees. A belt of pasture intervenes, and then from pretty inclosures, and from behind primitive walls and dwarfy pyramids of sombre-tinted thatch, arise the whiffs of aspiring blue smoke from the chimneys of the clustering houses. Poolley belonged to Marmion of Tamworth, who gave it in fee-farm to the Burdetts, upon a fee of ten shillings yearly. By the Burdetts it was transferred to the Sauvages, about King Stephen's period.

Osanna, the religious governess of Polesworth nunnery, granted permission to Helias, son of one Geoffroy Sauvage, that he might have unto himself a chapel and a chapel-yard there, for which he was to give four acres of meadow ground, and certain annual dues to St. Edith's altar upon her festival.

Robert Marmion, the grantor, passed a release, by which Geoffrey, son of Helias, for the consideration of "ten marks" as a fine, and a "sore sparrowhawk" yearly, to him and his heirs, held the estate of the grantor "for the said hawk and ij shillgs. yearly," on y^e feast of St. James, as a mean tenure. (A sore hawk, taken from the callow brood or eyry, was so called until she had mewed or cast her feathers.) By female heirs it went to the "Endeshoures," or Ensors of Derby.



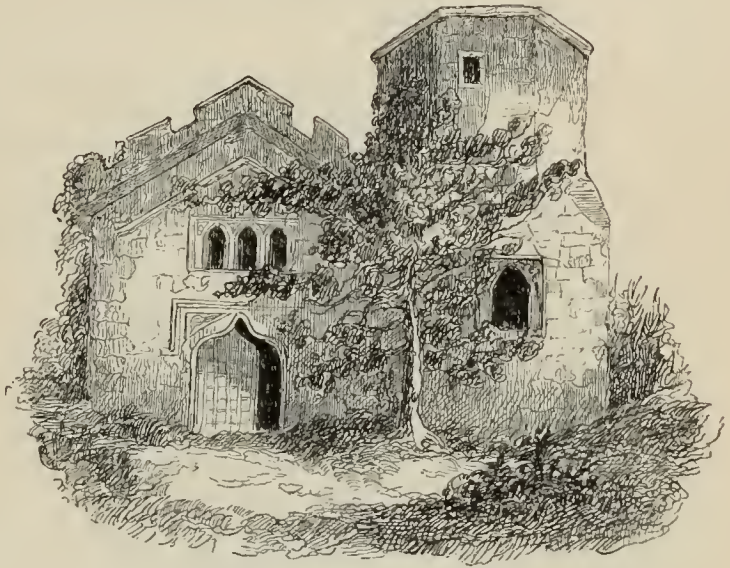
Polesworth Hall.

In the papacy of Urban IV. permission was given to old Sir Thomas de Endsor to provide a chaplain to his family, "forasmuch as in seasons the floods of the river hindered his people from attending proper worship at the church of the village or elsewhere."

The estate in due time fell to the Herthulls or Harthills, and from them to the "Cokains," who bore arms, *argent*, two *bars vert*. In the 16th Henry VI. "John Cockayne his son Thomas had a difference with Thomas

Burdett of Bramcote, and slew him." Tradition says that "a pretty girl was the subject of the feud;" that "the quarrel took place at the church porch upon a holy-day, before the several retainers;" and that "they fought by evening in a croft above the river, near to Poolley Hall," which was haunted by a fearful form for several years subsequent to the murder. Thomas Cockayne died absent from home, and the heir, Thomas, grandson of John, succeeded afterwards to the estates.

He was, no doubt, the founder of the present Poolley Hall, and he improved the chapel. Receiving our later information from our new associate, who added much to the life of our ambulating parliament, we returned not to the river side, as we had proposed, but continued upon the hilly walk to the rear of the hall, keeping in the direction of the Hermitage, which is by the side of the public road from Tamworth towards Ashby-de-la-Zouche.



Poolley Chapel.

"We have not had the Legend of Poolley Hall; it is in your scrip; let us rest upon the violets by the wayside, and you shall read it for our service." I answered with good will to the friendly invitation, and produced the yellow scroll of wrinkled paper.

The Rhyme of the Mournful Ladye; a "Legende of Poolye Hall."

THERE was a mournful ladye fayre
 The silent woods amonge;
 My sister saw her silken hayre,
 So golden-brighte and longe,
 When she led y^e little chyldren forth to heare y^e cuckoo's songe.

She tooke y^e wilde fruite from y^e tree,
 The dyngle was her bed:
 The greene turfe of the grave should be
 A pillowe to her head,
 For all day longe in symple brooks her bitter teares were shed.

She scared all fearful thynges away
 That watched her lonclye seat ;
 Combinge her lockes, by moonlight gay,
 Where waters murmuring sweet,
 Whirled round her rockye restyng place, and over her marble feete.

She was an orphan, gentle mayde,
 Wonderous fayre to see,
 A martiall squire with welthe arrayde
 Knelt at her comely knee :
 His rival was a youthful knight, and one of much degree.

Alack ! she was in piteous plighte,
 They were a noble twain ;
 For fyrste the squire and then the knighte
 Forecast her love to gayne,
 With each she wander'd stealthilie, and knew their love-sicke payne.

It was one cheerful holie day,
 And in y^e holie plaec,
 In bitter blood these foes, they say,
 Encounter'd face to face :
 Breathing such fierceness near to God, it was a foule dysgrace !

In evening's twilight cleare,
 Between yon uplande trees,
 They walked alone—cold death was neare
 Whysperyng on the breeze ;
 The one was strong—the weaker forme fell bleeding on his knees.

Beneathe a shadowy tree
 He sighed away the ghoste,
 Y^e murtherer fled to Normandie,
 And joynd a stranger hoste ;
 Y^e cursed by God, and safe with men !—it was a bitter boaste !

For lo ! the lyttle village mayde
 Fancy'd her dead love beste,
 And went all crazed, in wedes array'de,
 From home of earlier reste ;
 A greefe that none may scatheless beare was in her doleful breste.

Where March winds move the sullen miste
 In caverns olde and greye,
 The winter breathed, the snow fall kiss'd
 A lyfeless, loveiye claye ;
 She joynd her lover's joyful sprite for ever and for aye.

I've seen their duskie shadows gleme
 Around olde Poolye Hall,
 And quiveryng in cool Ancker's wave,
 When mingling waters fall ;
 And moonbeams playe with the ivye leafe upon y^e chapel wall.

The Hermitage was formerly celebrated for the "Well of St. Editha." Dugdale gives you figures of two kneeling females, dressed with heraldic draperies, and existing some time after the dissolution of monasteries, in the window of the oratory here. Hence some have supposed that this was a place allotted to several recluse ladies following the rule of the adjoining nunnery. I take the figures as representations of benefactors to both houses; and I believe that the waters having been "fountains of marvel" after the death of the saint, some actual hermit resided here, administering pious information and counsel to the multitude of pilgrims, supporting himself by voluntary contributions.



The Abbess.

Foundations of this hermit's chapel and cell are evident in the cellars of the farm-house now occupying the situation. The obliging tenant, Mr. Hewit, and his niece (our kinswoman), led us to the "well" under the eastern end of the kitchen, still supplying the pure fluid for ordinary purposes by the unsentimental pump aloft. Around the brink are remnants of ancient masonry.

We turned away from the desolated antiquity, mindful of the histories of saints—the catalogue of cures, and the daily host of invalids, once the attributes of this quaint locality.

One cannot wander in better ground, every thing is so perfectly rural immediately near to those places we describe, and the people themselves are so much as you would wish to find them.

"What think you now," quoth the Pencil, "you are so grave? I really

imagine you wish yourself with the pilgrims to St. Editha's Well, believing all the droll things they believed, and as hungry for nonsense as those poor creatures were."

"I was thinking," said I, "of some remarkable lines written by Wordsworth, which actually whirl one from the wakeful world into a philosophic dream. It refers to your own idea—most singularly too.

To aid the votaress, *miracles believ'd*
Wrought in men's minds like miracles achiev'd :
 So piety gain'd root ; and song could tell
 What humanising virtues round her cell
 Sprang up, and spread their fragrance wide around ;
 How savage bosoms melted at the sound
 Of gospel truth enchain'd in harmonies,
 Wafted o'er waves, or creeping through close trees.

But enough of dreams of our own. We are now with footstep close upon another point of remembrance."

Of the two figures in religious habit introduced with the scenic illustrations, the full length is taken from a good picture in the drawing-room at Alvecote. She was aunt to the lady represented in the other drawing, the subject of which is portrayed upon the wall of the dining-room in the same mansion. The former was taken at twenty-four years of age; the latter at twenty-one. They were kindred of the present Samuel Roby, Esq., and were of the name and family of Wells, residing at Burbage in Leicestershire: of this family was the learned Mr. Wells, who figures as an antiquarian in earlier numbers of the Gentleman's Magazine. Both the ladies were Benedictines, and were at a convent in Brussels, to which court Mr. David Wells, the brother of the elder "sister," had the honour of belonging. The bones of Burdett, the founder of the priory, lie at one end of the Alvecote ruins.



Benedictine Nun.

CHAPTER V.

POLESWORTH, AN OLD ENGLISH VILLAGE.—ITS HALL.—ST. EDITH'S
NUNNERY.—A LEGEND OF ONE OF THE MARMIONS.—BRAMCOTE.—
FAMILY OF THE DESTERS.—HOLLINSHEAD THE HISTORIAN.—ANCIENT
FOSSE AT SECKINGTON.—SHUTTINGTON.—ITS NORMAN CHURCH.—
SHUTTINGTON FARM.—ORTON-ON-THE-HILL.—MARKET BOSWORTH.
—SUTTON-CHENEY.—THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH.—VESTIGES OF
RICHARD III.—BOSWORTH CHURCH.—ITS FONT.—SHENTON.—SHEN-
TON HALL AND ITS VENERABLE PROPRIETOR.—CLERICAL ANECDOTE.—
A CLODPOLE AND HIS MELODY.—OUR FIRST VISIT TO A UNION
WORKHOUSE.—REFLECTIONS ON THE SYSTEM.—A BROKEN HEART.



CHAPTER V.



THE village of POLESWORTH is finely embosomed in a valley, well watered by expansive streams, and as picturesque and "old English," with its massively turreted church, the statute green, the ruins of the nunnery, and the village thatch and appurtenances of rural civilisation, as well can be desired.

We crossed the spreading water by the mill-path, and after enjoyment of the tranquil scenery, we made our way to the church, which bears a bulky imposing appearance of deceptive antiquity, containing within as much mutilation and whitewash cruelty as would throw Welby Pugin into convulsions, and paralyse a Flemish architect for his lifetime. Latterly, to be sure, some shamefaced warden has returned the desecrated font from the village green to the interior; but this is poison upon dagger, compelling the spirits of the baptistery to mourn, with the ghosts of the chancel, for the defacements of bigotry and stupidity. There are some effigies of ladies robed in the fashion of the fifteenth century—a few only; the head-dress of one is of much beauty. There is also a strange epitaph announcing a remarkably "long child."

There are some slender portions of the ruins of the "very old church" in the adjoining garden; their portion is small indeed. In a paddock between the church and the river there is a lofty pillar, with a surmount in the Tudor style, upon which is a dial, and a quaint inscription. Some of the worthies of the place consider this as the "ancientest of all ancient old things!!" but we cannot agree with them.

Disappointed of the church, Mr. Roby (who could not reconcile us by his apology to render it more favourable consideration) suggested we should revisit the building adjoining—a mass of straggling brick, timber, and batten- ing, faced with the disguise of a fair mansion of quoined brickwork. This is the "Victoria Inn," the palace of music, clamour, and voracity at the annual fair upon the 23d of September. It encloses part of the "Old Hall."

The remains of the manor house, at the rear of the interior, are satisfactory to the curious visiter. At p. 92. we present a sketch of the denuded "Family

Hall," wofully dejected, and deprived of the gay company of its prouder history. Harp and flute! how long since have they melted hearts in this gathering-place of the rich and the poor, who sat down together at the greater holydays to participate in generous feastings. The canopy of the daïs gallery is left; but its banners are decaying over the cornice of illegible tablets in cold country churches; the trees of May garland never more shall be hoisted to the huge, groined timber roof—the perch of bats, and cradle of perpetual cobwebs; and the squire, the warrener, and the belted forester shall lean no more upon that carven stone of the gaping obscure fireplace, and talk familiarly to each other of the sport of their hearts, and the reminiscences of regal companies. They have gone before us, to make beds for us to lie upon, when our chirruping song of to-day, and our thrill of delight in unity of soul together, must be peevishly exchanged (spoiled children of heaven as we are!) for the tender patting of the blear-eyed sexton's spade upon our new-made turf, and for that vortex of souls with which (as our desert must be) we shall blend for evermore. There will be no mortal of Dante's creation there to whom we may say

Quando tu sarai nel dolce mondo,
Pregoti ch' alla mente altrui mi rechi:

Returning to the bright and pleasant world,
I pray thee win me sweet remembrance there.

Free Translation.

Regarding this old hall affectionately, my companion of many regions exclaimed with fervour, to an old matron peering over the pans of her dairy, "Ah! *this* is the place for *me!*"

"Not if yo' have the rheumatiz!" she responded tartly: and we went hastily to the threshold to dismount the romantic steed, and to smile at her foolish misconception.

If any gay roysterer, or lover of rural customs and the queer ways of his fellow-creatures, would only spare a day in the autumn to attend the memorable "*Statute Fair*" here (Sept. 23.), he would be amply repaid. He could not seek a better mart for miscellanies, a better studio for physiognomy, or run a narrower risk of meeting with some handsome girls.

You leave the spacious green by an arched gateway in the dull ruins of Edith's Nunnery, the wall between the church and the perforated flat appertaining to this being composed of the worn fragments of Norman masonry. We paid a visit to the country surgeon in the centre of the village, a kind, grave gentleman, with whose son we had formed intimacy in early days.

He, well remembering the true line which Master Rob Langland gives in
 “Pierce Ploughman’s Vision,”

“It is not alle for the goste that the gutte craveth,”

compelled us, with hospitable zeal, to breakfast upon our journey; but our time was registered, and we soon left his threshold, and our hearty good-will and wish behind us for his peaceful family. We recapitulated as, with sounding staves, we kept time to our quick feet upon the dusty road, and guarded with downcast eyes our foreheads from the heat of the penetrating noon-tide sun.

First of all, thus says Leland, in the Collect., (of Polesworth Nunnery)
 “Robertus Marmion fundator, et Milesent uxor ejus”—

(*verba donationis*)

“notum sit omnibus nos concessisse Osannæ Priorissæ, ad relig. instaurandum. Sanctimonialium ibi ecclesiam, S. Edithæ de Pollesworda cum pertinentiis. Ita quod conventus de Aldeberia (Oldbury) ibi sit manens.” It is also registered in the same book, “Pollesworth moniales (Com. Warw. dedicat. B. Mariæ et S. Edithæ (temp. Henry I.).” A roll in old English, belonging in former years to John Ferrers, Esq., of Tamworth, gives a legendary tale of its foundation as early as the ninth century by King Egbert. He is stated to have thereupon consecrated it to the honour of “Our Lady,” and to have placed in it his daughter Editha as abbess, who being afterwards canonised, the monastery was dedicated to her: but John of Tynemouth ascribes the foundation to Athulph or Ethelwolf, son to King Edgar, whose son Alured, grandson to King Edgar, was cured by St. Modwen of a sad infirmity. “When England,” says the gossiping legend, “had a many kings, one in the West, named Egbright (the ‘*Illustrious Eternal*,’ quasi), was chief lord of the counties of Warwick, Worcester, Colchester, Hereford, Salisbury, Stafford, Derbyshire, Chestershire, and Lancashire. He had but two children, viz. Arnuph the Leper, and Edith.” A bishop from Ireland visited the King, and, seeing the pitiful state of the youth, related wonderful cures entrusted by God to Modwen, daughter of *the Kyng of Cunoche* (Connaught?): the boy therefore was sent to Ireland with the bishop, and he remained there a year and a half. He was cured; and Egbright earnestly implored the pious physician to transplant the efficacies to his own country. She consented. Thus we find that her epitaph upon the tomb in Burton Abbey testified—

Ortum Modwenne dat Hibernia; Scotia finem;
Anglia dat tumulum; dat Deus astra poli.

Britannia, Cambd.

She founded the monastery according to the rule of Saint Bennet, after having resided for a time in seclusion with her royal pupil St. Edith, and Saints Lyne and Osyth, in the marshes of Trensall in Arden Forest. At her decease (she did not reside at Polesworth for several years before her exit from the world), Edith was elected abbess, and her brother Arnulph, by the command of his father, visited her annually, to provide her with all sufficient lands, tenements, and proper places. Her monastery (says the legend) *was under Ancur, not far from Trensale, upon a depeness of water called "Poll and Worthe."*—Again another history: soon after the conquest of England, Robert Marmion coveted the possessions of the abbey, or "nunnery" as it has been termed, and took hold of it, driving the Abbess Osyth away, who retired with the community to their cell at Oldbury, which was upon the south side of the "fort" in the parish of Mancester and dedicated to St. Lawrence. But one night, as Marmion lay in his bed at Tamworth Castle, he roared out lustily in the dark for aid, and his friend Walter Somerville of Wychnor and Barton hastened to the call. The sheets were stained with blood, and the sacrilegious baron declared to Walter, that he had seen St. Edith, who rebuked him for the wrong he had done to her, and had given him a grievous thrust in the ribs with her pastoral staff. The counsellor felt equally alarmed with the injured man, and soon afterwards the abbess and the nuns were recalled, and treated with unusual favours. Indeed Sir Robert chose his place of sepulture in the chapter house of the abbey, and Walter Somerville was laid in the cloister. A ruined gateway, two or three Norman arches, a few transomed windows, are the poor relics of the foundation, and the powdered auricula and perfumed May-lily, the wild dock and the profuse foxglove, flourish from a soil mingled with the ashes of saints and lords, once prized in death, and folded in lead and silver and shimmering cloth of gold. This same Marmion and Milisent his dame, (Leland, *suprà*, temp. Stephen,) besides the restoration of property, gave the town of Polesworth wholly thereunto, and their demesne of Waverton (Wharton). It is the oldest religious house in Warwickshire, and almost the first in England for women.* At the *Dissolution* the income was set down at 87*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.*, (now worth nearly 2000*l.*): it was granted by the king to Francis Goodyere, Esq.; a delay occurred in the surrender of this monastery, which was deferred until the 30th of Henry 8th. The next is the

* The first nunnery in England was at Folkestone, in 630.

LETTER OF Y^c COMMISSIONERS IN 1537, TO L^d CROMWELL.

(*The orthography is modern.*)

“ After our duties of humble recommendation unto y^r good L^dship had, it may please the same to be advertised that We have surveyed the Monastery or Nunnery of Polesworth, in y^e County of Warwick, wherein is an Abbess, named Dame Alice Fitzherbert, of the age of 60 years, a very sad, discreet, and religious woman, and hath been head or governour there xxvij years: and in the same house under her rule are, xij virtuous and religious Nuns, of good conversation, as far as we can hear or perceive, as well by our examination, as by the open fame and report of all the country: and never one of the Nuns, that will leave or forsake her habit or religion; wherefore in our opinion, it might so stand in y^r L^dships pleasure, you might do a right good and meritorious deed, *to be a mediator with the Kings Highness*” [a very likely position for a rapacious servant!] “ for the said house to stand and remain unsuppressed. For as we think, *ye shall not speak in the preferment of a better Nunnery, nor of better Women.* And in the Town of Polesworth are 43 tenements and never a plough but one, the rest are artificers, labourers, & victuallers, and live in effect by the said House, and by the repair and resort that is made to the gentlemen’s children, and Students, that there do live, sometimes to the number of 30 or 40 and more, that there be right virtuously brought up; and the Town and Nunnery standeth on a hard soil, and on a barren ground, and to our estimation, if the Nunnery be suppressed, the town will shortly after fall to ruin & decay, and the people therein to the number of 6 or 7 score persons, are not unlike to preserve y^r Lordship, in good life & long, with encrease of honor.”

“ Written at Maxstoke beside Coventry the xxviiij day of July,
by the Kings Commissioners.

JOHN GREVYLL.

SYMOND MOUNTFORD.

THO^s HOLTE.

ROGER WYGSTON.

GEORGE GIFFARD.

ROBERT BURGOYN.”

It was suppressed, however, as was primarily intended, for the enrichment of the spendthrift sensualist. Their cell of Oldbury passed from the king to Brandon Duke of Suffolk, and thence to one Robert Green, who sold it to

John Symmons in the reign of Queen Elizabeth: 26*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* was the sum permitted for pensions and commendations: "Joan Penye y^e Prioress had fifty-three shillings and 4*d.* Margaret Todye, ditto (for her great age), and other thirteen poor nuns," had forty shillings *annually*. Remember, that in the 34th Henry 8. twelve ounces of mint silver (containing two ounces of alloy) were coined into forty-eight shillings; the silver bearing value at four shillings the ounce, and fine silver at four shillings and nine-pence halfpenny. Shortly before this time, says Stow, the butchers of London sold "penny pieces of beef," for relief of the poor; every piece two pounds & a half, and often 3 pounds for a penny." (See "Chronicon Preciosum," A. D. 1533, page 116.)

The face of the seal of Polesworth nunnery presents three canopied arched divisions, of which the centre one is most freely ornamented, containing the Virgin and Blessed Infant, she with crown and sceptre, — "Regina Cœlorum!" The figure to the right, in the flowing dress, is St. Modwena, and the saint to the left, with crosier and robes of ecclesiastical dignity, is the abbess Editha. The inscription runs in old character, "Sigillū: cōe Abbissæ et Covēt de Pollesworth." There is an escutcheon at the base, imposed upon a trefoil arch. "Peace!" let us say to the souls of the founders! Peace, to the spirits who have walked in holiness upon this ground! Verily, friends of mine! they knew as well as we know, and as the Kempis taught, in his consoling lessons: "L'habit et la tonsure servent peu: c'est le changement de mœurs et l'entière mortification des passions qui font le *vrai religieux*." Leaving the clustered habitations of the village, we strolled at leisure along secluded lanes, over whose boundaries of blackthorn and hazel, and stems of oak and nodding beech, we took a fresh acquaintance with Poolley, perched in shadow, upon the middle distance. We conversed of cheering philosophies, to wile away the loneliness and the wearisome stress of our sultry progress.

Crossing the bye-road from Polesworth to Shuttington, we ascended the pathway of extensive cultivated lands, and crossed also the shrouded brook which limits Bramcote upon the south. From the ridge of higher ground we walked into the pastures, which lie in the front of Bramcote, formerly a seat of the Burdetts, who received the estate through Walkeline de Grendon from the family of the Charnells. Robert Fitz Walkeline was permitted by the abbess of Polesworth to have a chantry in his chapel at Bramcote for a consideration of lands. The English worthy, Ralph Hollinshed, was steward to one of the Burdetts at this very place. He was a native of Cheshire. He took his degree, M. A. at Cambridge, in 1544, and in 1577 his notable Chronicles were first published by Reginald Wolfe, the Queen's printer. This

work was a compilation in which he was assisted by many persons; and although it has been termed a "tedious and vulgar history," we have many thanks to bestow upon the work, as a ready testimony to the manners, customs, events, and economies of our English forefathers: he died at Bramcote in the year 1580. We fancy we see him now (watching his phantom through the shelter of the goodly elm trees), by the decayed sluice of the rushy stream. He sits upon the trunk of an aged oak, shading his bleared eyes from the sunbeams with his withered hand; a huge tome of vellum is between his trembling knees, and the ink-horn at his belt contains the reed, which has formed so many dates, so many bloody pages of warfare, so much narration of the deceit of courts, and of the superfluities of kings and queens. From the thatched roofs of rural Wharton, celebrated for its spiring may-pole, and for its glee-men and morrice dancers of nimble deeds, the droning sound of the tabor, and the shrill liting of the clear pipe, and musical half-extinguished laughter, come with the eastern wind, and echo from the thicket around. The cold eyes of the peering chronicler are fixed upon the bents and water ribands of the brook, sparkling with shining circles, where the insects hold their mimic festival and flit with a ceaseless round. He hears not the tone of festivity; he is lost to the present, he is rifling the corners of the sepulchre, soon to be the last home of "the *just* or the *unjust* steward." Honour to thee! old friend, our companion in the dulness of winter, our gossiping story-teller in the shelter of sultry bowers, in the idle holyday of summers long gone by.

A family of the name of Dester resides here, — the gentlemen are of excellent spirit, and attached to the sports of the district; in the chase the foremost, and in all manly bearing most conspicuous. I know not what may be their family crest. There are "Desters" who assume "a palfrey" or "a charger in hand." The word "dextrarius" is found in old records (says Bailey) and signifies a horse for the great saddle." It is a word plainly derived from the poetical Italian word "Destrière" (a courser). Thus Ariosto (where Ferragus and Rinaldo battle for the fair Angelica, and parley with good reason as to the vanity of their contest, and the courteous rival whisks his antagonist to the croup of his own saddle, and pricking away with "four spurs," as he describes it, pursues the timid girl):

Da quattro sproni il Destrier punto arriva,
Dove una strada in duo si dipartiva.

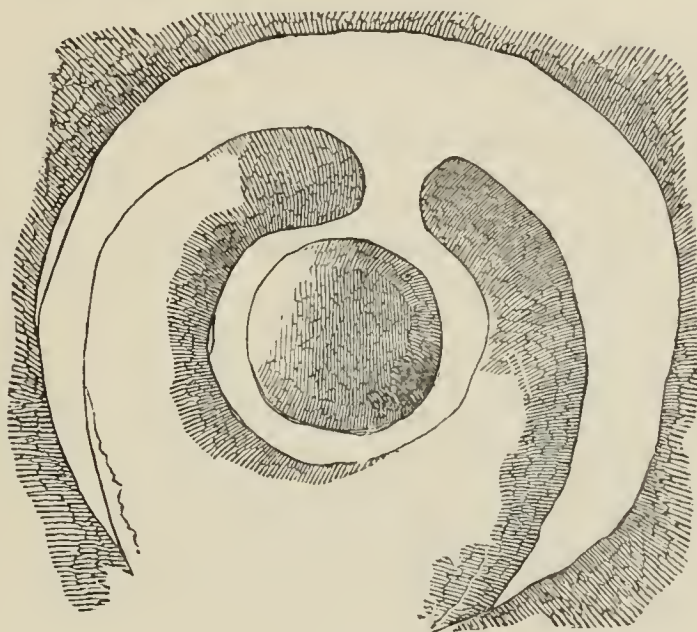
Listening to the personal feats of our pilgrim recruit, to tales of steeds and floods and flying foxes, bogs, fences, and contusions, in about half an hour's space we arrived, over pastoral ground, at the village of Seckington, which consists of some twenty or thirty cottage residences, upon the brim of

an odd roadway or street, cut in the shelving sandstone rock, which stands up as a high wall to the right of your entrance. There are a few cleanly dwellings, humble it is true, but of trimly sort; and some retired genteel residences, attached to well-provided farms, forming the eastern part of the village. The church is a tall grey structure of considerable antiquity, with a lofty spire: within, at the chancel, are kneeling figures upon one tomb of the Burdett ancestry, and in an arched recess beneath is a slab ornamented with a floral cross for some departed priest. The monument, or rather the effigy connected in popular belief with the legend of Burdett of the Holy Land, lies mutilated and abandoned to obscurity in the northern wall of the interior. The tracery of the east window has been very beautiful, and for a journeyman mason's day's work, it could be made so again, but Seckington is a very sleepy place, and as rife with half-digested visions as the surface of the haunted "*Mummel-zee*."* Traversing the churchyard, you step over the rude stile and pass into an irregular meadow land, in which and to the north-west of the church, at the distance of a bow-shot, is "the Fort," of which notice has been provided by many antiquaries. This consists of a verdant mound of a conical form, the summit of which is hidden by a crest of hawthorn trees, and by the latitude of the superior umbrage of the lofty trees around: connected immediately to this hillock is a terrace of an irregular shape, approaching to the crescentic form. The connection is by a slender neck of land. By a similar miniature isthmus, the inner terrace is connected with an outer circle of greater superficies, an embankment falling into the level of the meadow; and between the aforesaid mound, the crescent, and the embankment, are trenches of well defined, but of varied width and depth of excavation.

The diameter within the bank is 297 feet. The mound is 42 feet in height, and the diameter of the summit is 23 feet. That this fort, which lies close to the Ashby Road, was occupied by Roman military, is indubitable; but it appears to me extremely probable, from the size of the mound, that it had been occupied previously as an original British defence, and it is more than probable that in the British hands it was defended by a foss of considerable depth. The mound, the foss, and palisade or stockade, were the defences used where leisure permitted, against smaller bands of warlike force. The mountains, the rivers, the larger precipitous hills, and the marshes, were the refuge under more trying circumstances. Previously to Cæsar's invasion, the midland counties were studded over with the mounds of sacrifice and the hills of counsel used by their sagacious priesthood, and I think many of

* The Dreamy Lake of German tradition.

these would have been convertible, with small additional labour, into defence, for the use of slingers and spearmen.



The breadth of the outer ditch at the top is 20 feet.
 at the bottom 10 feet.
 depth of the same 12 feet.

Thus says the Saxon Chronicle of the fight of Seckington, which occurred in the Saxon period, A. D. 755: — “*And þy ilean zeape man of þloh Æpelbalð mýpena cyniŋ on Seccan-ðune &c.*” — (the same year Ethalbold, king of the Mercians, was slain at Seckington, and his body lies buried at Repton). He reigned one and forty years, and Bernred then succeeded to the kingdom, which he held but a little while and unprosperously, for King Offa the same year put him to flight and assumed the government, which he held nine and thirty winters. His son held it 140 days. Offa was the son of Thingferth, who was the son of Enwulf, who was the son of Osmod, who was the son of Eawa, who was the son of Webba, &c. &c. &c. Seckington, Secandune, is so called, *yece, prælium; ðun, mons, collis*. It is called Saggeolwalde and Sacchenda in old chronicles. The fight is stated to have been of uncommon fierceness and endurance, and the monarch herein mentioned was stabbed during the onslaught, by the command of the traitor, who succeeded to the throne, and who had been a chief officer in his army.

In the summer time it is delightful to ramble about the limits of this scene of many associations, — to tread in the footsteps of the centurions and crested legionaries of Imperial Rome, and to hear the breeze whispering its playful

mysteries over the graves of the children of Tuisco and Woden. The clangour of arms, once so loud, is hushed in the leafy cloisters; the neighing of the patricians' steed, and the shouts of the victorious cohorts to the uplifting of the invincible eagle. Now the melancholy theme of the whistling bullfinch is repeated in the shadowy eventide, the playful foal frolics around its serious mother in the waving herbage, and the flapping of the sable wing of the wearied rook is distinctly heard aloft, beat by beat, in the quiet air.

So, rotten death [as Shakspeare says] makes conquest of the stronger,
And leaves the faltering feeble souls alive;
The old bees die—the young possess their hive.

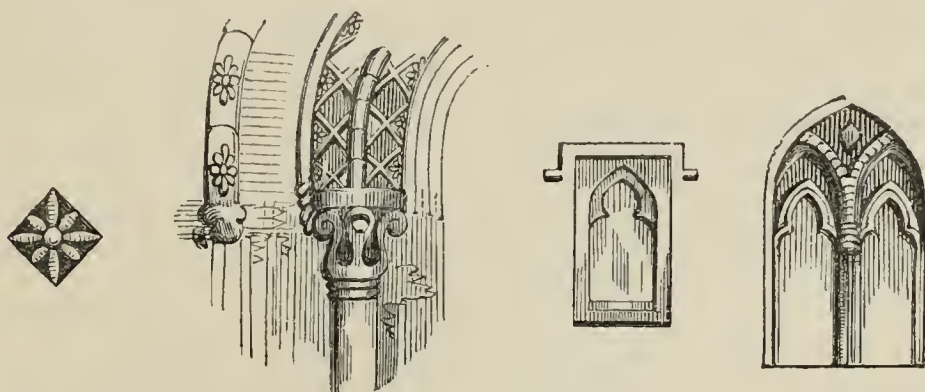
Where the moss grows green to-day, and the wild flower springs in the briery nook, there may some time be the "refreshment room" of a North Warwickshire railway station, or the vulgar emporium of a Brummagem agent for the sale of ginger beer and soda water.

From Seckington hill, there is a fine prospect of the surrounding country, and on clear days the towers of Lichfield can distinctly be seen, besides a multitude of old English church spires, arising from woods and valleys and hills around, many of them within a reasonable distance for the inspection of the antiquary, and replete with monuments of the nobility and gentry of the past centuries. And now doubling homeward again, we travelled over a succession of corn-fields and pasture grounds, varied here and there by copse wood, by pebbly darksome lanes, or by those hollows skirted with solemn trees which hide the brood of the timid water-fowl, and where the pool is broken into a sullen wave only by the fir-cone crumbling down from the banquet of the graceful squirrel, or by the water party of clumsy frogs, frightened out of their peace by the light fall of the withered spray.

By-the-by, Dante must have been an amazing student of nooks and hollows in country places. You cannot read the "Divina Commedia," without a startling sense of his intimacy with the small lively things of nature. The sad-faced Florentine introduces the frogs by way of simile more than once, and in such a school-boy manner as testifies to that perpetuated juvenility which is the attribute of genius.

In half an hour from the time we were rambling at the foot of the fort at Seckington we were seated in front of the porch of Shuttington church, which stands embosomed in the umbrage of fine trees, upon an eminence to the north of the river Anker; the priory of Aucote retiring into the gloomy dark green of the woodland of the opposite shore, in the level of the country below. It is a most primitive sanctuary, and the grassy estate of the dead which encircles the cold walls was a favourite retreat for me in the

holydays of other years, when poesy was in the brain and thoughts combustible, in dangerous propinquity with the spark of—Love! Then I used to revel in the luxury of the wild grass, and the shelter of the plumed elm trees, studious of the worn legends of the lichen-devoured gravestones. Since then forms dear to me and to mine have gone down into the cannibal mould, and the light ramblings of boyhood are converted into paths of thought and pitiful remembrance. The church is about twenty yards in length and ten in breadth; it has recently been mended up into the Norman style. A few years since, the damp chancel was like a half-illuminated vault, and it contained a huge corn-coffer of a pew, open to the floor, through the quarries of which the samples of oats and barley shaken from the handkerchiefs of the devout farmers were used to germinate, giving a fresh and lively appearance to the oaken enclosure. The original rude seats were then in the nave, into the centre of which dangled the rope of the “squilla,” or “tintinnabulum.” In the warmer days of spring, little unholy birds hopped through the broken glass of the southern casements, and pilfered flocks for their nest from the ragged pulpit cushion. The Norman door at the western end is represented in the sketch, and is a relic of interest. It is worked in several mouldings with opposed zigzag or chevroned lines with an intervening ornament, upon the outer indentation of the same, of the multifoil kind. The anterior mouldings are fronted by the beaded and indented portions, arising from two slender plain columns, ornamented with simple foliated capitals; the inner mouldings are unornamented. Upon an unsupported arch or label, taking in the insertion of the porch, the foliated lozenges are repeated.



Ornament of porch.

Mouldings of porch.

Porch windows.

South of the nave.

The principal defects of the building are evident, viz. the lumbering dove-cote upon the front gable, and the adornment of the east window, which should have been freely diapered. There is a ludicrous medley of the ancient and modern in the present idea. In this churchyard lies the body of our host's

grandfather, who died in 1775. He is mentioned in "Kirby's Museum of Curiosities," and in "Dr. Millingen's Curiosities of Medical Experience." There is also a memoir of the same "Mr. James Spooner of Shuttington" in the "Gentleman's Magazine." A short time before his death, being nearly fifty years of age, he weighed 40 stone and 9 lbs., and measured 4 feet 4 inches across the shoulders. He was a very temperate active man, of a peaceable disposition, and some of his company at market having offended a pedlar, in the inn at Tamworth, with a vulgar taunt against a Jew, Isaac revenged himself by leaving the blade of a clasp knife in the fat of the abdomen of our worthy, who received no other mischief than a trifling effusion of blood, and a considerable separation of his adipose tissue. He was taken to the grave upon the carriage of a waggon, the casement of the parlour where he died having been removed to allow of the exit of the coffin. Lambert, Bright, and Mr. S. were the three stoutest Englishmen in their succession.

In the "Dome Boc" we find of Shuttington as will follow, viz., *Cetitone*, Temp. Gul. I. belonged to Earl Mellent, an ancestor of the Earls of Leicester, who fought in the right wing of the army at the battle of Hastings. "The *Earl* holds himself in *Cetitone* 2 hides and $\frac{1}{2}$, and *Lewin* holds it of him, (Ceolred and Godric held it, and were freemen). The arable employs 3 ploughs, one is in the demesne, and 2 bondsmen; there are seven villains, and four bordars with 2 ploughs. Half a mill pays 5 shillings, and there are 8 acres of meadow; wood half a mile long, 3 furlongs broad; it is valued 20s." Then there is a further account of that land which the aforesaid Godric now holds of the Earl; the other " $\frac{1}{2}$ of the mill" being set down therein.

Crossing into an irregular piece of land over the rail by the "Wytch Elm" at the east of the church, you occupy a height affording a survey of the course of the Anker from Shuttington bridge, by Aucote, in front of which is the mill in question, or the site of the mill rather, humming the same dull tune to the husbandman afield as it was wont to do when Lewin and Godric bowed for land to the Norman Earl, and Ebba and Venda and Whitgare and Ulf cursed the toil and the new tenure, and slept on their litter of rushes from the stream, dreaming over and over again all the woes of the recent invasion. William Burdett became enfeoffed of Shuttington from Robert Bossu Earl of Leicester, and son of Earl Mellent. When the Priory was endowed by a Burdett, the church of Shuttington was appropriated to the monks of Aucote. There is only one presentation to the living on record early, viz. Richard the Prior of Aucote, 14th Aug. 1341. The village skirts upon the lanes in connection with the thoroughfare over the cemetery, and is very retired,

devoted entirely to the accommodation and residence of a people of admirable rusticity.

The evening came on with speed, and wearied limbs required rest ; through the foot stems of the tall hedge the twinkling blue of hyacinths appeared, pale in the waning light. Tiny beetles, like drops of condensed light, played upon the reservoirs of the trickling water-course, and in closer paths the preaching voice of the red bee, talking wisely to itself upon its road home, blended with the whirr of things in speedier flight. The forgotten links of wild flowers told where little children had played at noon, and the dismal lullaby of the cottage mother over her nursing love pictured domestic associates mingling at the close of the toilsome day. Curl clouds and shooting lines of wind cloud streaked the lofty sky, and the cold breeze furnished an instinct of toasts and tea-kettles and a chair by the farm-house fire.

Right glad we were to meet our smiling host again, who led us, with a second welcome as good as the first, to our place at the familiar board. There was no lack of material for our evening's amusement. The young ladies were in excellent humour for songs and feats of legerdemain, and the youthful brother would have given credence to us, if we had proposed to transmit the cheese-press, instantler, to the summit of Seckington hill, or to hide a fitch of bacon in our waistcoat-pocket. The father was a congenial auditor of the more personal adventures of the day, having a shrewd eye to the ways of the world, and a superior appreciation of the soul of a jest. The parlour of the farm at Shuttington was our banqueting-room, our theatre, our council chamber ; and before midnight, in the interval of melody and laughter, we had made up our minds to Mr. Samuel Roby's plan of a visit to Bosworth Field upon the early morrow. The old face of a rustic employed upon the land, which I recognised through the faint light of the wood fire, in the common kitchen, reminded me of his favourite songs — songs of harvest suppers, which are original, and one of which may entertain curious persons interested in such affairs generally.

“ Here's a health to the jolly wood-cutt-er,
That sits at home at his ease ;
He does his work by the sleight of his hand,
And he leaves off, when he -please'—
For he takes a withy and he winds it,
And he lays it on the ground ;
And round the faggots he binds it,
So drink round ! my boys ! drink round !

Drink round — my boys ! drink round ! for the sooner it will come to me —
And the longer we stay here, brave boys ! the merrier we shall be.”

(bis.)

During the chanting of this ditty, to a very agreeable tune, the black cans are filled, and the words "drink round" are honoured by the "brave boys" in capital time, and they make the "jolly wood-cutt-er" a plausible excuse for the repetition of the song by the next in the circle; and thus, until they are wearied, or "cried down" by magisterial proclamation.

Of other customs here I have not leisure to fill the page: many there are indeed, but the space is required for something more, or (as Dante says, in the 32d Canto of the Inferno,)

" Io premeréi di mio concetto il suco
Piu pienamente : "

" I should yield forth the juice of my conceit abundantly."

The same night, in the small chamber of the farm upon the hill, we had a sweet sleep, and both of us dreamt true dreams of our homes in the far distance — dreams, not of things, but of natural thoughts, prophecies as it were of future welcoming and joy. We neither saw the limbless shade of Mistress Burdett, nor awoke to the nightmare of a heavy-armed Roman trooper, or the ghostly powder-wigged form of the murdered valet of Repyngton; and yet *this* should have been the phantom, if we had known then, as we do now, that the ugly weapon in the host's bed-chamber was the identical sword which slew the liveried varlet.

We awoke early, for the town of Bosworth is at a considerable distance from Shuttington, and there was necessity for haste. The mist was wafted along the vale of the river, and aloft there were incipient "sunder-clouds," and to the horizon indistinct strata in lengthening shade. The voices of the farm were renewed; the "come-back" of the guinea-fowl, the half-crow and chuckle of "partlet" upon the nest, the loud thrush in the garden trees, the distant cawing of rooks, the wail of the peacock, the lowing of the herd, and the repeated clarion of strutting chanticleer. Whilst the dull mallet echoed from the field, the customary robin, with its swelling dark eyes, perched upon the laburnum at the threshold, and sang its hymn of confidence and ecstasy. The chill breeze wantoned in the pear tree of the wall and swung its blossoms, like bridal garlands against the windows of the chamber. It was the hour when prayers of gratitude, and not of fear, are heard in heaven, before seed of remorse is sown, and the eye hath been weaned away from natural inspirations, by more vulgar necessities.

Scarcely had we breakfasted when our companion of yesterday rode up the hill, equipped in fine order for the day, and at the same instant we were informed that the farmer's horse and gig awaited our inclination at the door.

Flinging a few books of reference into our wallet, we said good morning to our fair cousins, and soon were upon the confines of the county of Leicester. It would be a mere repetition to describe the scenery of our route. At the village of Orton-on-the-Hill the ground is lofty, and there is a charming prospect of the rich agricultural "vast" around. The church is picturesque, the tower, surmounted by a slender tall steeple, looks out like a ghost of night with its open arches from the trees which skirt the road; it is situated in the south-west part of the county, in the deanery and hundred of Sparkenhoe. Mr. William Paul, formerly curate at Carlton Curliou near to Harborough, and chaplain to Sir Geoffry Palmer, then curate of Tamworth and usher of the free-school there, afterwards curate of Nun-Eaton in Warwickshire, was instituted to this vicarage on the 5th of May, 1709, by the Bishop of Lincoln, afterwards Primate. He took the usual oaths to Queen Anne, and abjured the Pretender. However, being of a reckless disposition, and fond of excitement, he went down to the rebels at Preston, where he was detained a short time upon suspicion. After joining the rebels at Lancaster, he returned to Preston, where by request he thrice read prayers for the Pretender as King. In his intention to proceed to London, he could not refrain from figuring away in his own neighbourhood of Orton with his coloured clothes, laced hat, long wig, and dress sword; and soon afterwards he was accidentally met by Thomas Bird, Esq. Justice of the Peace for the county of Leicester, who knew him and took him prisoner. He was conveyed to the Duke of Devonshire's (afterwards Lord Townshend's), Principal Secretary of State, there examined, and detained in the house of a messenger. Fourteen days subsequently he was sent to Newgate. He was arraigned at Westminster, May 31. 1715. He withdrew his early plea of not-guilty; on July 13. 1716 he was drawn, hanged, and quartered at Tyburn gibbet as a confirmed traitor. General Thomas Forster, the rebel, (whose history, including his escape from Newgate, is well known,) told Robert Patten, minister of Allandale in Northumberland, and Jacobite chaplain in ordinary, that Paul had furnished him with much information relative to the marchings of General Carpenter, and the condition of his troops: Patten was taken prisoner at Preston after the fight, and he saved his life by giving evidence for the crown.

Dashing at one time with speed along the common road, at another while fording the shallow waters which traversed more solitary lanes, with scarcely the meeting of a wanderer or wayfaring countryman, in the early day, save when by the narrow bridge at Sheepy we saluted the dame who held the latch of the wide-opened gate, we arrived about ten of the morning at the Dixie

Arms in Bosworth, and resigned horse, whip, and vehicle to the half-dressed jockies of the stable in the rear. The town is small in extent, adorned with a handsome church, and a hall in its immediate vicinity girt with delightful grounds. There is as usual a wide central space for the market folk, and towards the northern side the handsome "Grammar School," erected as a specimen of modern Gothic. Some old half-timbered houses nod into this small space, and others, more picturesque and of the cottage grade, flank the entrance to the park from the inn. The name Market Bosworth is derived from the existence of a mart here in the early period; and one of the Harcourt family obtained a grant of such, or a confirmation of previous customs, in the time of King Edward the First. The Free Grammar School is richly endowed. It was founded by Sir Wolstan Dixie, Mayor of London in 1585, a worthy who figured in the civic rolls of Queen Elizabeth's reign, and whose portrait adorns the walls of Christ's Hospital. Dr. Anthony Blackwall, the biblical critic (who wrote a dissertation upon sacred classics, to defend the writings of the New Testament from the charge of pernicious writers, who contended that it was a mass of "barbarous language, false Greek, and solecism,") was head-master of this school; he died in 1730, and engraved portraits of him by Benigeroth and Vertue are extant. The lexicographer Johnson was Latin usher to the divine, but he was disgusted with the arrogance of the patron of the foundation. Budworth of Brewood, whom Bishop Hurd remembered as Quintilian's "model of a schoolmaster," was afterwards applied to to afford an assistant's situation to the "irritable Samuel;" but the secluded, simple pedant declined the proffered services, fearing that the irregular motions which palsy had inflicted upon Johnson's face would amuse the boys, and divert their attention from their books. Upon this rebuff, the younger man retired to the residence of his kinsman or schoolfellow Mr. Hector, the surgeon, in Birmingham, where for a publisher's mite of 5*l.* he wrote the translation of "Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia." The Dr. Blackwall here mentioned was a shy student, and he resigned the living of Clapham, in Surrey, given to him by Sir Henry Atkins, to return to the hum-drum of Bosworth and the academy. At the Dixie Arms we disturbed a pretty lady, who was weaving all kinds of botanical magnificence in Berlin wools, to make inquiries for possible accommodations. The landlord was slow in his movements; and in the interim we held a council of pilgrims, in the front parlour, at which many things were mooted and abandoned, the while the clock with altered visage rebuked us for delay. "Now listen to me," said I, "time speeds, and much is unaccomplished which I have determined upon."

"We are to visit Bosworth Field!" said my companions.

“Certainly!” I responded; “but it would be better to inspect the churches in the vicinity first; where, possibly, the ashes of the distinguished who were slain in the fight may have been secured, whose effigies may furnish interesting food; then we can return over the hills into the “Field,” and thus to our *hostelrie* again.” It was agreed that this should be our active course. “*Cadeby* is our direction, onward!”

With quickened pace we took a pathway leading across the park adjoining. The mansion of the Dixies is to the left, and overlooks the park with its wide, plain, stone-dressed front, and cool landscape effect. Along the open grounds the deer at timid distance ambled in nodding troops and graceful file, and the rare aquatic birds upon the pool dashed the foaming surface of their watery home, and screamed rude defiance to strangers and all that was not of the feathered kind. Threading the wooded skirts of the forest boundary we entered the village of *Cadeby*, which is an uninteresting jumblement of town-like “*villa-boxes*” and of white-washed walls capped with the thatch of “*desolation*,” and we proceeded to the sacred edifice, standing at the cross-path of several roads, in the centre of the village. We might as well have left our search alone. Every avenue was guarded with gate, lock, and bolt; and when we climbed the wall, and peered into the dim windows veiled with many-tinted dirt, we found nothing to repay the serenity but the cold floor the dingy roof, the second-hand pews, the more comfortable pulpit, and a sooty flight of horrible stove piping. A small, moon-faced boy, who was leading a raw-boned cow from delicacy to delicacy of the charnel turf of the cemetery, to our query, widened an aperture (between two purple lips) similar to the slit in a charity-box.

“They do’ant let noobody here, only *me and the Cow*, ’cept un-a Soonday. The *Waar-den* kips the gheet lock’d.”

Adieu to church of *Cadeby*! stoved like a hothouse upon Sunday for the tender plants of devotion, who proceed with leaves nipped and chilled by the barren “week-days” to their Sabbath decencies. The church is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the S. E. of *Bosworth*, and *Sutton-Cheney* is of rather less distance from *Cadeby*. Excepting the stunted cottages to the north of *Sutton* church in the lane, the church itself, and the small “hospital” houses ranged opposite to the chancel window, beyond the wall, the village has few attractions to the admirer of picturesque scenery. We had the mortification to find the gates of the churchyard closed upon us, but we climbed the wall. The building itself consists of a nave and chancel, a south porch, and a square tower, terminating with a low pyramidal roof. The north side is appointed with four double trefoiled arched windows, and the buttresses of the same side are



Sutton-Cheney Church.

niched, and of a superior architecture. The chancel window is of three lancet divisions, beneath three quatrefoils in the superior division of the arch. Near to the south porch, which is a pointed arch of considerable antiquity deeply moulded, there is an old tub-shaped font of stone, ejected from the church to serve as a receptacle for the rains of heaven and the newts and snails of the dirty damp corner. We lately read in one of Hone's works of a "churchwarden's tobacco-box" preserved in envelope upon envelope of costly ornamented material, and yet the value of the nucleus was once dear at a couple of groats. It is in the metropolis. Now, in faith! why reject these old fonts to make way for penny basins, and such trumpery implements of sacred baptism? Is there no reverence manifested to God and one's ancestry, by imitating the "tobacco-box zeal" of the London churchwarden, and enclosing or re-sculpturing the body and the brink of the laver, to which the white-robed infancy of nobility, gentility, and rustic humility, without a distinction, have been borne to accept the holy name and sign in the years

gone by? Out upon the hypocrites, who lament the destruction of the coffins of fighting-men, and the obelisks of royalty, and forget these eloquent emblems lying forsaken in the wilderness of an unfruitful world!!

On the north side of the chancel (we could only obtain our view through the windows) lies upon an altar-tomb the tablet of which is supported by emblems of mortality, (the hour-glass, the death-bell, &c.) the famously sculptured effigy of Sir William Roberts, who died in 1633, aged 79. The armour and the draperies of this figure are very beautiful. In a small recess in the east wall above his feet, are miniature figures of his two wives, Catherine Elkington and Elizabeth Hartopp, in the kneeling posture. He was the son of Thomas Roberts, who built the adjoining "hospital," for six poor men, and endowed it with 30*l.* per annum. Upon the southern wall, near to the porch, is a kneeling figure before a desk; this is the effigy of one of the "Mays*," formerly Lords of Sutton Manor. The heraldry is over the figure, &c. In this churchyard, in a grave which was repaired by the pious zeal of the antiquary Throsby, lies Simpson, the weaver's son of Bosworth. His life is to be found in the ordinary books of biography (the Dictionary of Biography, Rees's Cyclopædia, &c.) He derived the rudiments of his education from the books which were lent to him; and a certain pedlar having instructed him in astrology, he was induced by the master to show off upon a poor fool of a girl in the vicinity, who came to consult the oracle. A pretence having been made "to raise the devil," the girl was alarmed into convulsive fits, and the wiseacres absconded. Simpson fled to Derby, and kept an academy there, afterwards in London, at Spitalfields. During his progress he feasted upon the marrow of abstruse learning, and profited thereby so much that we find him Professor of Mathematics at the Royal Academy of Woolwich in 1743, and in 1745, F. R. S. Simpson died at Bosworth in 1761. We read that "the abbot of Croyland held two plough lands in Sutton" at the Survey, and indeed considerable part of the lordship belonged to the abbey, for the abbots held a court here, and were lords of it. In pulling down an old wainscot at the house of Mr. Roberts many years ago, there was discovered a large quantity of old writings, containing records of Bosworth fight. These are entirely lost. In 1793, a lady of the Dixie family testified that she had read the papers, the items of which we shall incorporate with our material.

As the weather seemed cloudy towards noon, we took but a hasty view of "Dickon's nook" (a hillock whence he harangued his army); it stands in some

* When we returned to our evening quarters, Mr. Roby, senior, informed us he had, on the same day, been attending a board of guardians, before whom the last descendant of the aforesaid Mays appeared for parochial relief.

wooded ground, over the highway at the south of the church, between the Sutton and Hinchley roads. Leaving Sutton, and making a point over the "Spinney" (*Spinetum* or *Thorny Place* of Dome Boc), we attained the crest of the hill, which with semicircular bend includes the Red-moor or field of battle, sweeping on the south of Sutton Field, which lies in front of Bosworth Park, and from the centre of King Richard's position, towards the lower south, where Dadlington lies upon the centre of a crescent, with its convexity eastward, and thence, westward, to the "White Moors," below Shenton brook. We descended and traced the field. "King Dick's well," between the lines of the two armies, may be known from the position set down in the accompanying plan, which was taken by a Mr. Robinson in 1789. With this, and a reference to ordnance surveys, or other recent plans, the distinction may be made, between the Bosworth field of the present, and of the past. Such an aid too is absolutely necessary in following up the circumstance of the encounter. The historical proceedings antecedent to the contest are in the school histories. Henry of Richmond embarked at Harfleur, on July 31. 1485, and he landed at Milford Haven, on Saturday the 6th day of August. His route lay through Wales, by Dell, Haverford West, and Welsh Pool, to Shrewsbury. It was his policy to agitate a principality attached to his Welsh blood, for he was descended from ancient British kings, and had many relations, and a great interest there. He passed on to Stafford: had he taken the passage direct to London, he might have encountered more speedy opposition. Resting for one day only at Lichfield, he departed towards Tamworth, at six miles distance. Hungerford and Boucher deserted their leader Brakenbury, and joined Richmond's army, between the two places last mentioned, and on the next noon (August 19.) came Sir John Savage, Sir Bryan Sandford, Sir Simon Digby, and others. The following morning, preceding the army, and with a private guard, he hurried forward unto Atherstone. That night, secretly, and in a "little close" near to the town, he had an interview with the Stanleys, and their schemes were solemnly appointed. It was resolved "that the Stanleys should seem to avoid him, as if friends to Richard; that Richmond should hasten to the field; that Lord Stanley should keep at a distance to his right, and Sir William upon the left; that when the two armies of Richard and Henry were drawn up face to face, Lord Stanley should form, and cover the opening between Richard's left and Henry's right; and that Sir William should do the same on the opposite side; but they should join neither; so that when the four divisions were marshalled, they would form a hollow square. While the King and Earl were engaged, the two brothers should stand neuter, and thus also if Henry proved victorious;

but if Richard excelled in advantage, they were to aid Richmond at all chances."

The Stanleys retired towards the field, and Henry to his soldiers, encamped north of the church at Atherstone. Lord Stanley passed through Lindley, Higham, and Stoke, and encamped upon a slight eminence called Gambles Close, a mile onward, and in the rear, though somewhat to the left of King Richard's forces; for the fierce man, infuriated with this unlooked-for bravery and might, had hastened with a vigorous army from his residence at Nottingham Castle to Leicester, and thence rapidly to Elm-thorpe, and to a camp upon either side of the Hinckley road below Stapleton. Sir William through Shenton approached the field upon the west, and encamped about half a mile from Ambien Hills, where partly in a wood the traces are yet to be seen; and on the night of the 20th of August, the four captains were thus placed: Richard two miles east of Ambien Hills, Lord Stanley three quarters of a mile to the rear, the rivulet of the Tweed dividing the several forces. Henry was at Atherstone, Sir William Stanley was in the place we have noted down. Had Richmond counselled to advance upon the Hinckley road towards London, Richard would have been thus prepared to dispute the ground. Early on the 21st of August, John Hardwick of Lindley, near to Bosworth, presented himself to Henry, with some horsemen accoutred for battle, and conducted the distinguished adventurer to the plains of fight, "advising him (says the history) in the attack, as related to the ground, &c., and how to profit by sun and wind." They left Atherstone, and renewed the camp upon the "White Moors," half a mile behind Sir William's camp, as in "the *plan*." It was fifteen days since the landing at Milford Haven. Here they rested for the night, the foes but little more than two miles separated. The central plain is termed "Red Moor," from the colour of the soil, as the meadows westward are called "White Moors" for a similar reason. The whole field is uneven, about two miles broad, and a mile in length between Bosworth and Atherstone. The south end, where Henry appeared, is three miles from Bosworth, now a considerable wood, bounded by the rivulet. Into this rivulet from a well called "the King's well," about thirty yards above the wood, a small course of water runs through the wood, forming the morass which Henry is said to have had upon his right. The highest point of Ambien Hills is a few hundred yards from the well. The fields towards Bosworth were not implicated in the history. The whole was one uncultivated piece of land. The march to the field was unimpeded. We may compute, that Richard's forces were about 12,000 fighting men; Richmond had about 7000 only, and Lord Stanley had 5000; Sir William commanded 3000. On

Monday the 22d day of August, 1485, (Sept. 2., new style,) Sir Simon Digby returned from midnight espionage, and informed Henry that his opponent was preparing for the *melée*, and the trumpets accordingly sounded "to arms;" but it was several hours until the engagement occurred. Lovel, Catesby, and Ratcliffe were at the royal tent before the full sunrise of the morning. Tradition says, that a bloody corpse, a sentinel slain by the king whilst sleeping in the twilight, was near, and Richard said, "I left him asleep even as I found the knave."* The troops were hastily reviewed, in Sutton Field, between Stapleton camp and Amyon Hill. At the hillock called Dickon's Nook, he harangued them, in a speech which set the virtues and valour of the foe, as a jest and scorn, and a theme for bitter invective. The army then marched in battalia to Ambien Hill, where they arrived before the antagonist had marshalled his soldiery. Richard's right wing lay upon the declivity to the Bosworth side, called "the Lays," his left extended northward beyond the well. Henry now marched up, with Sir William Stanley shifting ground before him, as if in tactic, and at this juncture it is supposed from evidence supplied, that he was played upon by the ill-served artillery upon the eminence. However, no great harm was done, for Henry, bareheaded and with helmet in hand, rode to and fro amongst his cavalry, and afterwards from a trifling mound gave a cheering oration to the infantry, who were eager for the affray. The two lines were now in full sight of each other, and the liveries of the retainers, the cognisances of the nobility, and the bristling point of weapons could be distinctly seen, for the lions of war drew hard breath, and gazed at each other with unwavering ferocity. The Earl of Oxford led the front line of Richmond's army, composed of bowmen. Henry with a select body of horse and foot supported him, forming with a line of billmen and spearmen the vanguard. Sir Gilbert Talbot led the right wing, and Sir John Savage with his "stout fellows in white surcoats and hoods" the left. The Duke of Norfolk, (whose camp had been upon the ground, right before the centre of the boundary between Cadeby and the Pool, southward of Bosworth Park upon Sutton Heath) opposed Oxford's line with the Earl of Surrey; and Richard supported them with the vanguard. At ten o'clock in the morning, while the sun was mounting fairly, and with a jocund face, glancing upon the steel and gold of the armed men, and brightening

* Sir Thomas Browne in the *Religio Medici* relates this anecdote of Themistocles, and is corrected by his editor, J. A. St. John, who relates, that it was done by the general Iphierates at the siege of Corinth. See p. 141. (*Relig. Med.*) Now that quaint old fellow, Owen Felltham, in his 48th *Resolve* "of Idleness," attributes the action to Epaminondas, by which we may learn how much modern history is indebted to the ancient, for many embellishments and exaggerations. F. P. P.

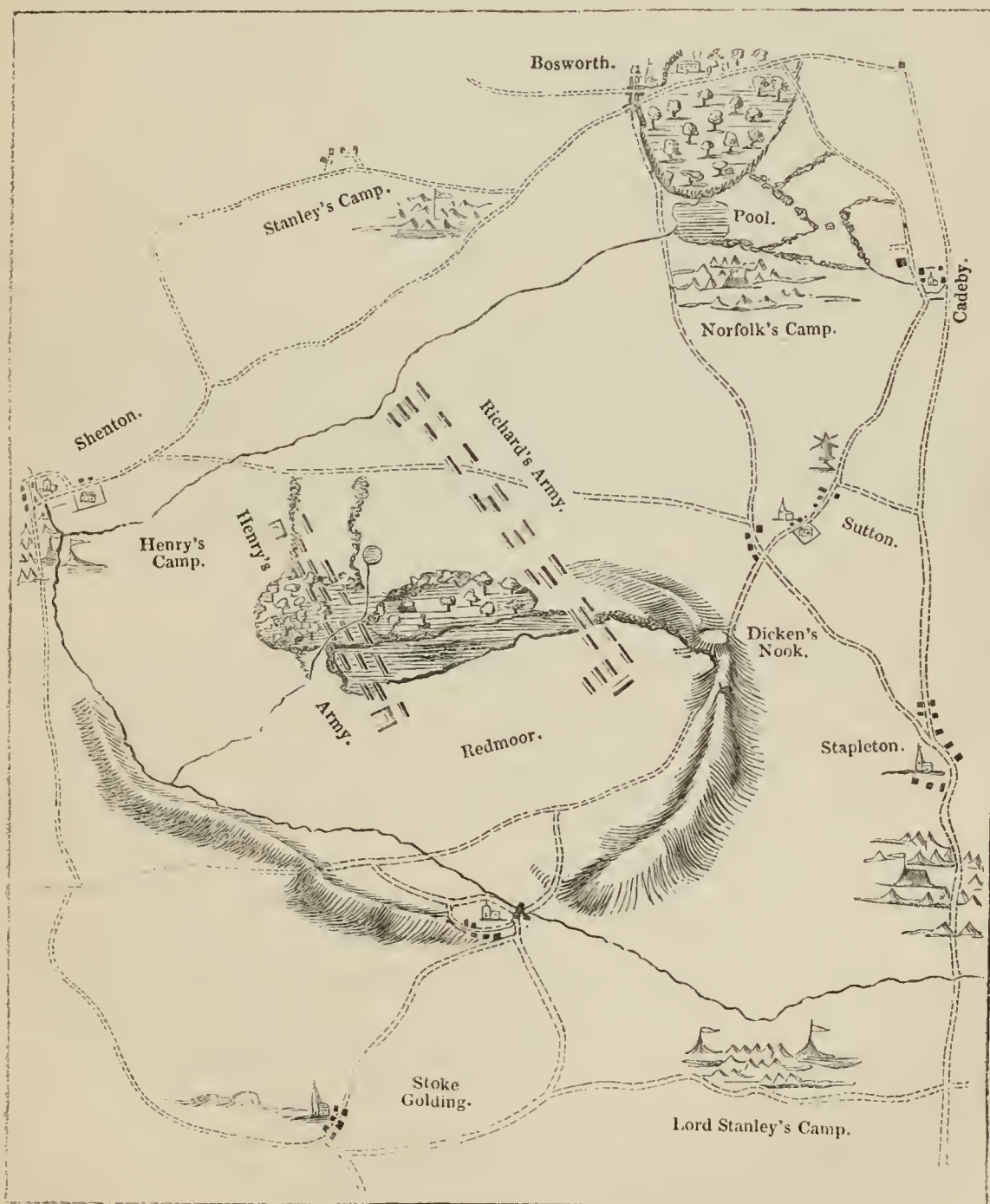
every flourished pennon, that lagged in the lazy air, with a great shout, and a rattling shower of arrows, the fight began, whilst the wounded horses leaped high into the air, and pikemen, harried face and limb, knelt growling to the earth, to the discomfiture of their fellows in the lusty ranks of fight. Richard sorely repented him that he had not smitten off the head of the Lord Strange, hostage for Stanley's faith, who now looked down upon the fray with cool and provoking judgment of the strength of either party. "Lord! how hastily (says Hollinshed) the soldiers buckled their helmets — how quickly the archers bent their bows and frused their feathers — how readily the billmen shook their bills and proved their staves, ready to approach and join when the terrible trumpet should sound the bloody blast to victory or death!" The trumpet had sounded truly, and the first blood was flowing freely, and the thirst for combat was quickened to desperation. The lines advanced to fight it out bravely hand to hand, and steeds neighed wonderfully, and shouts and rattling of armour pieces kept time to the clanging march as they closed upon each other, and struck with halbert, and pike, and axe, and trenchant blade, with the hoarse war-cry as of old for the York! or the Lancaster! Whilst the ruder varlets clutched each other well, and let souls out with big wounds, the nobler captains singled out each other, and came to trial of their accomplishments. The Earl of Oxford, whose line had been extended injudiciously for ostentation, ordered his men to close, and to fight nearer to the standard. This startled the officers of King Richard's side, who half suspended the conflict. Oxford had two motives, and one was to give room for the approach of the younger Stanley, as had probably been preconcerted. At this pause he stimulated the Welshman onward with an encouraging word, and the groans and thwacks and dints of lance and spear upon jacket and steel, made horrid discord, blending with loud-mouthed trumpets and the mighty rustle of the panoplied host. Norfolk singled out Oxford by the device upon his ensign, "the star with rays"—and he knew Norfolk by the "silver lion." They attacked each other with the lances, and when these were shivered, with their ponderous battle blades. Wounds were given and received, until an arrow from a distance pierced the Duke's brain, through his broken helmet, and he fell lifeless to the ground. Surrey, resentful beyond endurance for the loss of his father, redoubled his strength, and sent many a fine crest to the reeking ground. Talbot engaged with him, and they strove furiously — the stripling and the veteran. Sir Richard Clarendon and Sir William Conyers were resolved upon rescuing Surrey, who was exhausted by his own fury. Savage and his fellows surrounded them, and they were cut into pieces. A private soldier seized upon Surrey's garment to hold him

as his prisoner, and his arm was stricken from the body at one rapid sweep of the sword. This done, he surrendered to Talbot, and was led away to the rear.

At eleven o'clock only the front line of each army had been engaged, and they kept their ground in excellent spirit, though the grass was a slippery footing because of the gore of the fallen people. Richard maintained his position in the centre of the rear. Henry remained in the left of his own central line. As Richard was jostling away with his guard, to aid the van, a varlet came to inform him "that his rival was posted near with a slender attendance." Now the person of Henry was signified to him, for he did not know him. Attended by Lovel, Ferrers, Radcliffe, Clifton, Brakenbury, and Catesby, who with one exception were going to their death-fight, he cried, "Let all true knights attend me, and I will soon put an end to the quarrel: if none will follow I try the cause alone!" Sir William Stanley, to his mortification, was within hearing to the right, with 3000 cool fighting people.

Richard was attired in the same suit of armour (polished steel beaten with gold) in which he won the battle of Tewkesbury fourteen years before. Upon the "salade" or head-piece he carried the chapeau of estate decorated with a circular coronet of gold. Sir William Brandon moved the standard of British Cadwallader (the red dragon) in front of Richmond, with hot speed, and his followers in equal haste. "The white boar" charged upon the group surrounding it. "*Sir William Brand' was one of tho'; Kynge Henry's standarde he hevyd on hys, and vamisyd it, tyll with death'ys dent he was y' stryken down,*" says a MS. in the Harleian collection: and again, "*Syr Richarde Percivall Thurleball othar hight, Kynge Richards standarde he kept on hyghe tyll his leggs were cut hym fro; yet to the grounde he would not let it goo, while breathe was in his breste.*" The ordinary story is, that with his own hand Richard cut down Sir William Brandon, by sword-play upon his head. The rhyming account states that he "*the pile (the point) of his strong staff into his arm pit sent.*" Though the king had fixed lance in rest when he wheeled round from the right wing to this onslaught, there is a tradition which will account for his abandoning spear for blade; for, says an old MS., "runnyng forward with hys, unto the other side, he fell therewith into a marshie playce, soe that he was loathe to accept a horse in place of y^e one he rode, which was halte bye strogglinge therein." It was probably at this precise time that he quaffed a hasty drink of water from the well, then so near to him, and so near to his death-bed. Next he struck down Sir John Cheney, who was so helpless, in his own defence, that he was hewn

down with scarcely a parry to avert the blow; and now he struck hard to reach his rival so near to him, but forces concentrated; one by one his knights and peers were hurled lifeless to the ground, and trampled on by the ringing horse-shoes of clustering steeds. Hand to hand with unequal strength parrying and thrusting here and there, his head-piece and crown in the dust, and the laces of his armour loosened, and rent away, he fought with supernatural energies. The scene in Guarini's "Pastor Fido" was a faint mockery of the combat.



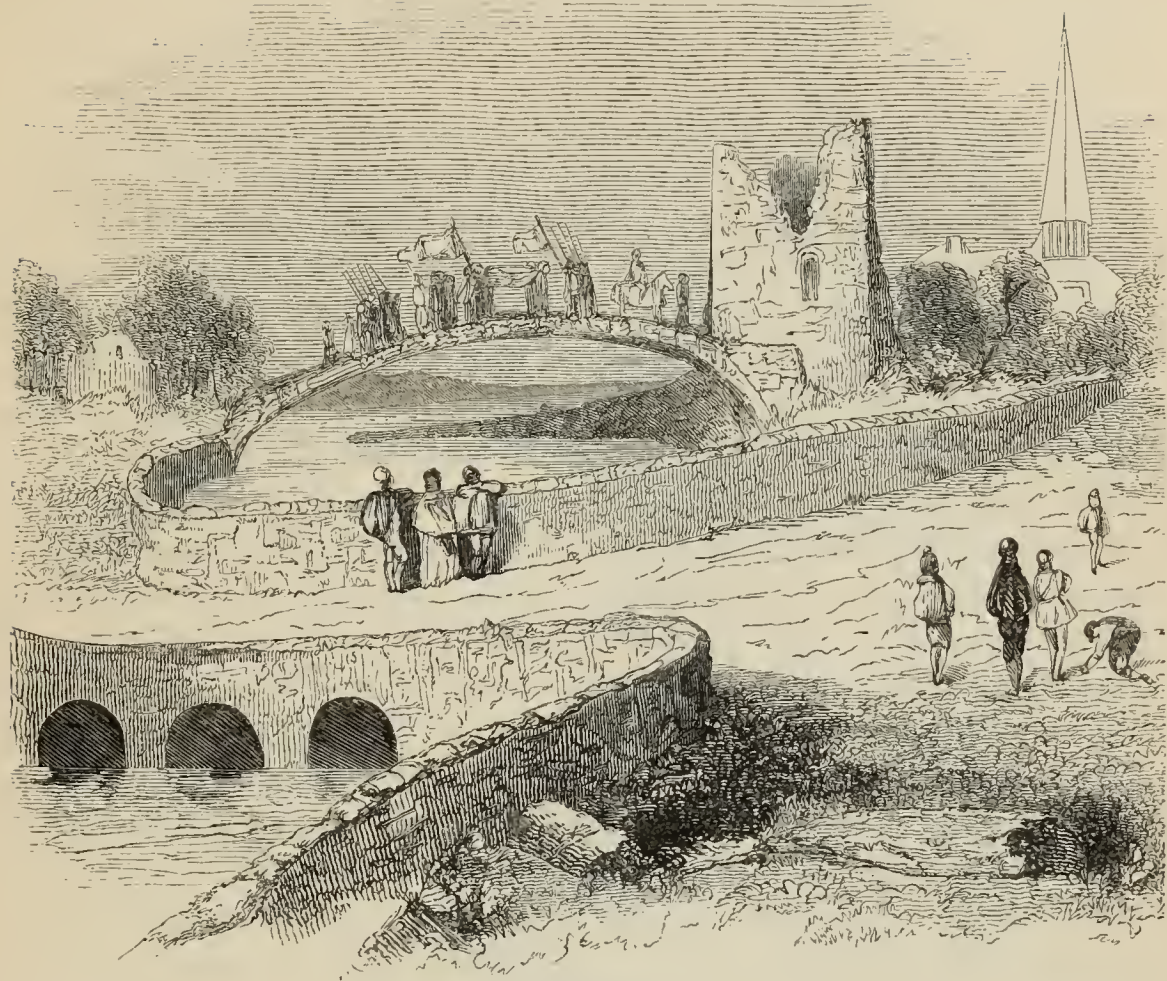
Plan of the Battle of Bosworth.

“Cosí a un volo rotar di quelle zanne,
 “E spumose e sanguigne
 “Si vedean tutti insieme,
 “Cani uccisi, haste rotte, huomini offesi.

“So the BOAR! wheeling about, his tusks all froth and gore,
 “Piled in one heap, (steeds?) slain spears snapt, men lacerated.

Hitherto the foremost lines of each army had maintained good ground, and in such case, the slain would be of diminished number: there would be too much contrivance of fight for swift slaughter, and pike and halbert commissioned but few ghosts for “the shades;” but the two Stanleys bore down on either side to the discomfiture of York; and a shout arose, that Richard King of England had bitten the turf; his troops all at once gave way, and to the left and to the right made haste in inglorious retreat. The stream of fugitives, the officers and horsemen, took their route to Stoke, whither they were pursued by the avenging Richmond, squire and baron accompanying with the freshly mustered squadrons of their train. Common fellows of the discomfited side flung away their arms and party distinctions, and hid in the woods and hollows around. Many surrendered prisoners at discretion. Those who ran so fast that they had lost breath to roar for “quarter!” were picked off by the troopers and billmen, and by the archers, who had yet a trimly quiver full of points. On such occasions it was deemed honest to revenge a brother or a comrade slain by a redeeming wrath upon runaways; therefore many a whimpled dame mourned the next day for her belted lord, and many a sobbing Joan and village Winifred grieved for husband and lover slain at Bosworth Field.

When “Harry of Richmond,” fortunate and joyful, arrived at the hill near to Stoke Golding, a knight rode up to Lord Stanley, and presented to him the battered circle of gold which Richard had worn upon his “chapeau,” and at the same time the loud shouts of Victory! victory! were heard from the army forward in pursuit. Lord Stanley led the descendant of Cadwallader to the ascent of the hill, and commanding the attendants to kneel, he placed the crown upon his head, and proclaimed him “Conqueror and King!” The acclamation which followed was remembered for long years afterwards. We make no fashion of crowing to the rising sun. We leave Henry the Seventh at “Crown Hill” knighting loyal gentlemen upon the field, and arranging for his further progress, and we will follow the body of the “Crookback” to his tomb at Leicester, “trussed like a calf,” says the Chronicle, “and naked as he came into the world,” upon a sorry steed, which for a rider has the herald “Blanche Sanglier,” now for derision re-appointed to the pitiful service; and thus over the ancient bridge the guarded corpse goes dangling



Richard's Funeral.

into the town, to lie exposed to a scornful mob, for two hot summer's days, and then to be sepulchred in the church of the Gray-Friars. Woful change this! and a lesson for humanity in its conceit. The day before his coronation he rode from the Tower of London to Westminster in a doublet and stomacher of blue cloth of gold "wrought with netts and pyne-apples," a long gown of purple velvet furred with ermine, and a pair of short gold spurs. The *pine-apples* of regal enjoyment are turned to the "apples of Gomorrah," and the net of the destroyer hath fasten'd every limb of strength. Cerecloth "green lothesome swaddling" is now his suit of service, and more securely is he lodged here than in his favourite "Castle of Care" upon the hill of Nottingham. Peace to thy ashes! Man of infinite blame — "the bloody, bold and resolute."

For fifty years the body rested in the tomb (an alabaster with an effigy), which cost his parsimonious rival exactly "10*l.* and one shilling." At the merciless Reformation his tomb was dashed to pieces and the remains were turned out by the townsfolk. Tradition says they were thrown into the

water or buried at the "bridge foot: the coffin was converted into a horse-trough at the White Horse Inn." It was destroyed in the reign of George the First. The supplement to all our gossip may be found in common history.

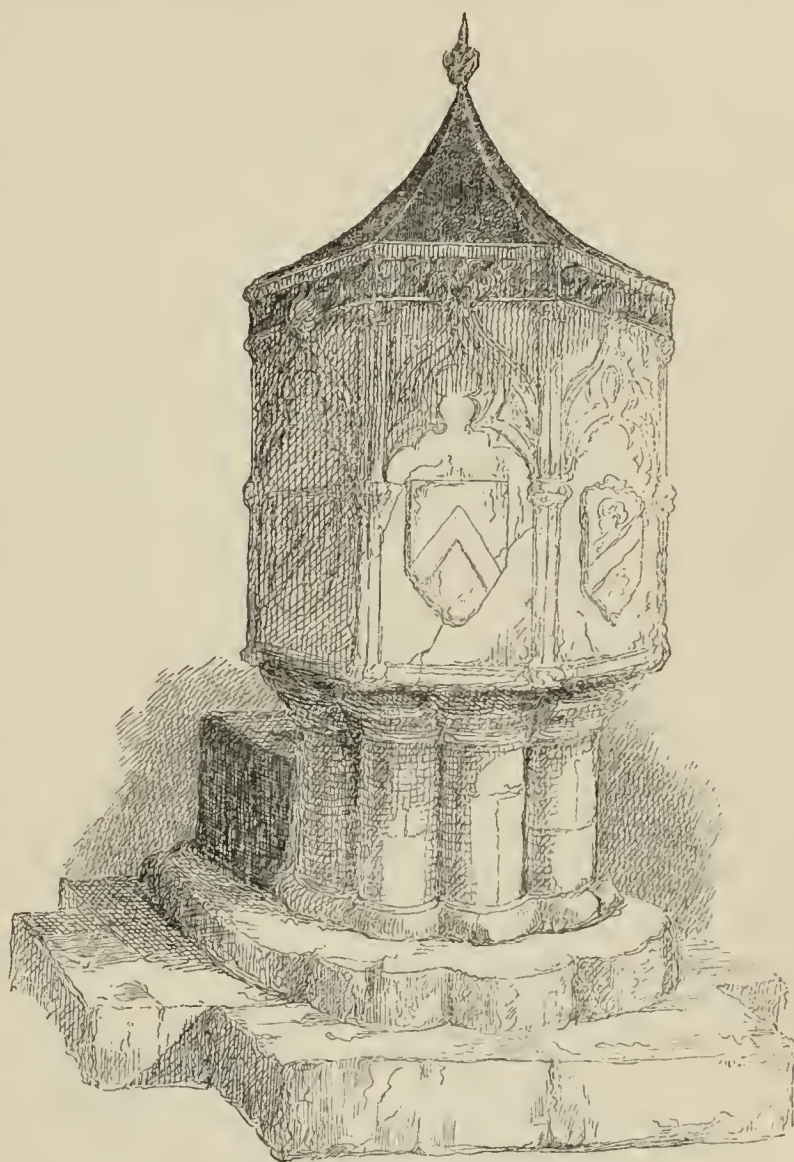
Whilst the sun burst forth with renewed brightness we stooped down and quaffed from Richard's well, although the purity of the drink was somewhat deteriorated by the adulterations of the witless kinc. The spring is built over with an open pyramid of rude stone, and upon a tablet in the posterior wall is this inscription, by Dr. Parr: — "AQUA. EX. HOC. PUTEO. HAUSTA. SITIM. SEDAVIT. RICARDUS. TERTIUS. REX. ANGLIÆ. CUM. HENRICO. COMITE DE RICHMONDIA. ACERRIMÈ ATQUE INFENSISSIMÈ PRÆLIANS. ET. VITA PARITER AC SCEPTRO. ANTE NOCTEM CARITURUS. 11. KAL. SEPT. A. D. MCCCCLXXXV.

We returned to our comfortable inn, and when we had inspected the provision made for our good quadrupeds, we made a combined attack upon the flesh and vegetables, which were laid out for us upon the parlour-table: but eating is one of the most unromantic things in the world, (a bit of cannibalism, or a banquet after the one in "Lucrèce Borgia" always excepted,) and we contented ourselves with one spur of whisky toddy to aid our progress to the adjoining churchyard, which borders upon the neighbouring grounds of the hall, replete with splendid stems, undulating lawns, and crests of healthful foliage. The door of the church was fastened, and we were peering into the sanctuary through the opened casement, when a very obliging gentleman, who was passing by, offered to bring the keys and to show us the interior. He disappeared for a while, and then led us into the southern porch. The nave is separated from the aisles by four regular semicircular arches, over which are clerestory windows: the modern organ gallery is supported by twisted wooden pillars: at the east end is a fine window with tracery of the middle period; and in the walls upon either side are three windows of the same. The sedilia of the altar space are mutilated by a dashing monument to one of the Dixie family, whose memorials, blazoned and adorned with sculpture, are numerous in the edifice. The roof is high pitched and the older oaken framework is visible. There are some dingy trophies upon the spandrel of an arch in the northern aisle. In a chest of rude construction in this part of the building are "a gilded spur, and a hilt with a portion of rapier blade attached:" there are relics of the "Redmoor Fight;" and the spur is stated to have been pulled from the heels of King Richard when the body was despoiled upon the field. It was strange to find in this holy place exhibited the outward ornaments of a man who, in his lifetime, scorned to

consecrate either heart or sword to the service of heaven above. We are sorry to find fault with the shabby museum in Bosworth Church ; but if there must be a something to gain a fee, who would not add to these doubtful relics, a dried snake, or a dead alligator, the wig of Pope Joan, or the jack-boots of Jonathan Wild?

The font before the western gallery is worthy of the notice of the antiquary. The shaft is hexagonal, with escutcheons upon the interspaces: there is an ascent by steps to the "kneeling-stone," where formerly the gossip held the babe for its blessing. The shields upon the font are these :

1. a chevron
2. two bars
3. a fret
4. (blank)
5. 2 bars
6. 3 chevronels.



Font in Bosworth Church.

The Mays of Sutton were benefactors to this church in ancient times. The first rector was William de Verdun, in 1221. The entrance by the belfry tower is defiled with rubbish. The steeple is lofty, and has a ring of five bells. The western aspect of the church is excellent, and the architectural points are good. Our "gentleman porter" edified us with some information which declared him to be a fervent lover of the antique, and he shared with us our hatred of Vandalism, and the "white-washing" clergy. "Some few miles distant," said he, "there is a church, in the chancels of which, displaced by violence in the sixteenth century, lay two well-sculptured effigies 'Baron and Femme: ' the clerk, who was an authority, under guidance

of his superior, ordered these to be rolled with the lever and block into the weedy trench of the churchyard a short time ago. "Drat them (he said) they'd heard sarmins enoo' (enough)." We gave him thanks for the courteous attendance, and returned to the inn, where restless nags awaited our footsteps with impatient breathing. Before we mounted we noticed the impression and daub of the Dixie arms and motto upon every thing around—in the inn windows, over the inn door, upon cisterns, spouts, troughs, and buckets.

"What does this perpetual 'Quod Dixi, Dixi' mean?" we enquired. One of the grooms replied with an impudent joke, which turned upon the cant signification of the word "quod," and it was evident he had little care for the good-will of his neighbours. Travelling by the road which leads south of Bosworth, verging S.W., we again obtained a view of the "Field," of the Duke of Norfolk's camp, before the park over toward Cadeby, thro' which he entered to his station, upon our left hand, and of William Stanley's camp at the corner of the road to our right, and before we arrived at Shenton, upon the left we saw Ambian wood and fields, now skirted by the Ashby canal and the lands to the rearward of Henry's position.

Shenton is a poor and homely village. The hall (much repaired) remains, and is the principal feature, with its projecting bays lying upon an ordinary domestic façade, and its wall and venerable porch in the front. The grounds at the back towards the river Tweed are open, and of considerable extent and beauty. Colonel Wollaston, the proprietor, was taking his afternoon's walk in the fields when we presented our cards to his valet, and lest we should break an old man's custom, we retired to examine the simple church, upon a rugged terrace of turf near to the residence. It is a rude edifice, the walls of which and some of the windows are of an early period. There is a square western tower imposed upon one of larger area, to which is a plain pointed arch, over a former entrance now filled up with a private door in the void. There is a rickety porch to the south, and in the aisle to which it enters



Shenton Church.

a dim window, east and west, through which the most blessed light, from the glad world without, streams down upon the damp quarries, and broken slabs upon the floor, with rays like those which it gathers to wander in dungeon vaults, and in the winter-caverns of the wolf and bear. Oh! cautious dame of Polesworth Hall, avoid the "rheumatics" of Shenton church.

Upon the wall east of the communion table are two busts of a Wollaston and his lady. He was lord of the manor, and she was Anne daughter of Humphrey Whitgreave of Great Bridgford in the county of Stafford: he died in 1666, having survived her thirty-seven years. Upon the tablet between the busts is an inscription in the usual style. There are remnants of old brasses upon the pavement of the chancel. We flung ourselves upon the floor, to examine them; but with little success. One is to a very prolific Mr. Everard, who died in 1556; and to another is the verse, in Latin, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. This also is to an Everard. There is a rude apartment in the tower filled up with the clumsy frame of the bell scaffold. Here we discovered amongst the rubbish the wooden style surmounted with a chalice-shaped capital, being the "font" of preceding generations. From old records we take it, that "one Roger held two ox-gangs (each about thirteen acres) at Shenton. There was but one villain." Sir Richard Molineux, of Sefton in the county of Lancaster, conveyed the estate and Hall to William Wollaston of Oncote, or Onecote, in Staffordshire, who rebuilt the same. Over the window of a room in the interior of the Hall of Wollastons, now occupied as a closet, there is an inscription, cut rudely, almost in Runic form, stating this re-edification, and the date of the same, 1629. The Tettenhal family are the same by whom a gift of loaves is still doled out to the poor of the parish who attend at Tettenhal church. By the way, these same loaves, some day or other, may go into the wall of the poor-house, or some other charity over head and ears in difficulties, for upon Tettenhal vestry-wall (a portion of that sacred building) there is a notice distinctly painted in unblushing white, upon a large board, which mentions how "one Dorothy Fowler's donation to buy religious books for poor boys and girls" was *used in the repairs of the workhouse!*" and therein swallowed up! and this too in the teeth of the law; that is to say, of the clergyman's vestry library upon the desk opposite (Burn's Justice, Nolan on Poor Laws, Bayldon's Valuation of Poor's Rates, and other such publications, which we noticed there). Returning to the Hall, we learnt that the Colonel had arrived, and we were introduced to a tall, grey, military-looking gentleman, of venerable appearance, who, with his lady, listened to our inquiries for memorials of the adjoining battle-field with all courtesy.

“ We were mistaken (he said) if we had been induced to believe that such were to be found in his mansion : such there might have been, but they had vanished.”

One old weapon he had taken from the field, and we were favoured with a close inspection. It was a rusty semi-basket-hilted blade, of genuine antiquity, and as brown as a hazel-nut. Such was the sword described by the doggerel—

This is the sword of John of Gaunt,
A blade both true and trusty :
The Frenchman's blood was ne'er wiped off,
Which makes it look so rusty.

The posterior half of the residence has been thoroughly modernised. Upon the passage between the chambers of the second story there are columns, cornices, and escutcheons of heraldry, the remains of the old state apartments. In a chamber of the attic there is a fine panelled oaken bed, and the carved wainscot of the kitchen in the lower range is worthy of notice. The Colonel has some fine paintings. Those in the upper gallery by Kneller are of great lustre and character. One figure, in a deep blue scarf, fixes the eye with invincible attraction. His engravings too, by the modern artists, are proof impressions, and accompany you upon the staircase with recollections of Landseer and his gifted contemporaries. In truth it is feeble praise to eulogise “ Moon and Boys ” in these passing recollections. Their publications are in the portfolio of the palace, in the vestibule of the aristocrat, and in the greedy store of the collector. Even the poor connoisseur stints his person of some mis-called luxury, and saves wherewith to be wedded in joy to one dazzling gem of the engraver, and to nurse it homeward for a perennial banquet. The most valuable painting in the sitting-room is the “ family group ” of the Wollastons by Hogarth, worth all the toil of the way, for its originality and accustomed boldness.

In one of the chambers there is a portrait of the Colonel in his younger days. In the parlour is a second by Ripplingale. The former is a full-length in water-colours, and represents him as the military equestrian. It was a sentiment that came over us, as he gazed upon it earnestly, and directed our attention to it, that those lusty years of excitement had not withdrawn their charm from feeble memory, and that even when additional infirmity appeared, those bright picturesque eyes, and that gay attire of the past, would infuse the fleeting spell into the dim orb and nerveless limb of the fading veteran. The day was declining, or we should have spent the succeeding hour with the kind gentleman, over his library and other selections. May our grandchildren

live to be so firm and old, and may they endure with equal pleasure the remembrances of their youth!

Before we made our exit from the porch, we passed over to a line of lowly huts, to request fire for our evening cheroot. The old labourer who supplied our wants was playing with his lark, which hung in a primitive cage at the cottage window. "It be partly a pity," he said, "to keep poor 'rattle-trap,' as Sells calls him, in such a place as this, for he do sing so desperate wild." We should have loved to have seated the old man in our own ingle nook, and to have read one little passage from "Webster's Duchess of Malfi" to him, preaching from the beautiful text, the while he watched the bubbles worming upwards from the bottom of our goblet of home-brewed ale.

"Didst thou never see a lark in her cage?—Such is the soul in the body:—this world is like her little turf of grass, and the heaven o'er our head, like *her* looking-glass, only gives us a considerable knowledge of the small compass of our prison."—

"Have you a *good* clergyman here?" said our friend of the Sketch-book.

"Pritty well! pritty well! and nothin' to find a fault by!" replied the bleary-eyed cottager. "He has a many fine words of *his own* to say to us, and he don't come 'Waterford' as *some* folk do." "What's Waterford?" we each inquired. "Oh! you do know I'se be boun' gentlemen! It be an old story hereabouts. You see at one time there was a parson not fur off, as preached in one '*pilput*' many a year, and he preached out o' one lot o' sarmints, two and fifty on 'em (his own grand-fayther's), for just as many years as he liv'd in his parish. Now he and his clark was great chaps together and as good as two brothers.

"The clark, he was at the public one evening, and the miller says to the clark, says he (it was of a Saturday), Old '*I'm a mon!*' says he, (they called him *that* because he said amen a' that 'ns,) 'next Sunday's the 'Waterford' Sunday. Parson 'll send us all to 'bye bye' with Waterford!' Now this was a sermon about some chaps as got into drunken ways, and was hung in a heap at Waterford in Ireland; at least he brought that into the sermon, for pleasantness like! 'I lay thee two shilling, we don't have Waterford!' says the clark, 'Done!' says the miller, thinkin' the clark had forgotten the day.

"Up goes the clerk to the parson, and, 'Master!' says he, 'to-morrow's Sunday!'

"'Tell your granny that!' says the parson, who was clipping the ears of a terrier whelp.

"'Well, but,' says the clerk (louder like), 'we *mon't* have Waterford to-morrow!!!'

“ ‘Why not?’ says the parson, turning down the whelp.

“ ‘Whoy,’ says the clerk, ‘a ’cause *I’n bet two shillin’ on it* at the public!’

“ ‘Oh!’ said the parson, ‘then I must give ’em ‘the Good Samaritan’ over again:’ — and the chap won his wager!”

We laughed at the tale, which seemed a likely one for past times, and we left the village in a merry cue.

The road from Shenton to Grendon is dull and uninteresting. In all the long distance we had a vision of a few rooks, a many sheep, two or three smock frocks, and a world of willow-trees; and when we arrived at the latter place, where the copses are fortified by bristling dog-spears, to confuse the Tamworth poachers, we could not help complaining of the drive. Far off, upon the wooded eminence, the shafts of sunset reached the tower of Merivale upon the left, the “*vallis-hilaris*” of Camden, “*Ubi Deo et Beatae Mariæ semper Virgini Monasterium crexit Robertus de Ferrariis,*” and where he was buried lapped in a cow-hide, *stitched up in it*, as some say, for Christian humility. When we passed through Polesworth we had lost the zeal of the preceding day, and we only regained spirit at the threshold of Aucote Priory. There we sat down to the cheering refreshment of the old parlour and its hospitable board. Mr. Roby showed to us a rusted hanger or dirk, which had been dug up on the farm, and some copper Roman coins, which were found in an earthen vessel in one of his ploughed lands. Some are of the period of Constantine, bearing “the Galeated head, ‘*Urbs Roma,*’ and the ‘wolf and children’ under two stars.” T. R. P.

The wood fire burnt cheerfully, and fatigue was a consideration for tomorrow. In pleasant conversation we passed away the time, whilst the hound slumbered upon the hearth-stone, and from walls reflecting the sudden light, the quaint and interesting features of the ancestral portraits looked down upon the living group. Nuns of the Benedictine rule were there, and dames, the loved ones of matrimonial Benedicts, now loosed from earthly bondage, and afloat for eternity, in the maze of disembodied spirits, where

Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,
Our happiness, and all that we have been,
Immortally must live, and burn, and move,
When we shall be no more.

SHELLY.

The hostess brought forward a MS., the work of her grandfather, David Wells, Esq., of Burbach in Leicestershire, an antiquary of considerable note, and a constant contributor in his lifetime to the “periodicals of the day.” His portrait is with the rest of the family, and is esteemed a faithful likeness.

In looking over the paper, we found information which would have been advantageous earlier. We made a memorandum, that "William Burdett, grandchild of the founder of Aucote Priory, upon his death-bed, gave half a yard of land, and his water-mill at Radeliff, and in his life xij a. out of a tenement at Aucote, to maintain a lamp to burn before the altar of the Virgin Mary in the church of St. Blaise at Shuttington."

In the 26th Henry VIII. this church was valued at 40s. Six pounds were reserved for the curate out of the king's grant to Audley.

In 1707, Shuttington curacy was returned to the governors of Queen Anne's Bounty as being at 6*l.* per annum. Lord Coningsby gave 200*l.* to the augmentation, and government allowed 200*l.* more.

Joan Robinson bought Aucote from Audley. Joan died in the first year of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Her son and heir (William the son of William) mortgaged it, with Drayton Basset in the county of Staffordshire, to William Paramour, a native of London.

Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, who had hand and heart in many an infernal "batch" of evil, coveted the estate. He obtained Paramour's title, and jostled Robinson out of it. As he passed it to his queen, with Shuttington, for other lands, it remained with the crown. With much regret we took kind leave of our companion of the day, and the Aucote family, and in the lone evening we proceeded to our home upon the hill. Our way was cheered by the merry soliloquy of a clodpole, who was walking on both sides of the road at once, and whose broken songs often came to a hiccuping halt by a lurch into the gravel holes. The rollicking melodist struck off into a sort of "tarantella," or hornpipe; but voice and equilibrium were null; and he shot off, head first, with a determination to go anywhere, and he was lost in the darkness of Polesworth Lane. Well would he have joined the Danish warrior in his death-song—

In the Asæ's lofty house
I shall sit and ale carouse,
Hours of life shall swiftly flie,
But let me laugh, and laughing die.

Depend upon it there was the reckoning to pay, with some sharp-elbowed wife, of less jocular mood, when he arrived home, for he had been "out too late," and so said our host of the farm, when we saluted his ears with crack of the whip at the closed threshold. That night we drank our two favourite toasts, and retired to our bed-chamber. We slept soundly, dreamlessly; we knew nothing of the phantoms which fling

Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,
Behind them.

The following morning we left the farm early and with regret, looking back oftentimes and eagerly, to the fervent and excited kinsman who said "farewell" to us, as if once more he should have said "welcome," but might not do it. When birds are hushed in winter hours, and leaves have fallen, and we are in the disordered limits of folio and foolscap, we shall sometimes throw the pencil and the pen aside, to remember the kind and beautiful faces which detained the pilgrims for the whole of one glorious day in the early summer time; and when cares are around, and the dream of night is a wearying fantasy, we shall wish with a sincere wish for one burst of their laughter at the evening festival, and for the peaceful, healthy repose of the "little chamber!" We left with the intention of visiting Kingsbury, from the station of that name upon the Birmingham and Derby line, but an error of time compelled us to leave that venerable Saxon village and its scenery alone until a future chance should be our own.

Our travelling companions "upon the line" were men "well to do in the world;" that is, men who in their several callings have learned the mystery of "taking in the natives," and "skinning them clean" to their own immediate advantage; shrewd, cold-faced, well-dressed persons, with a sort of a "warehouse likeness" equally divided amongst them. One of these solemn gobblers, talking over a huge white cravat, held forth to his consulting brethren upon "the worthiness of the existing poor-law unions." The inhumanity of his formal utilities was intolerable, and we renounced the "hamper of ogres" at Birmingham with sincere joy. When first we left home, we varied the scrutiny of olden times by a peep into one of the union workhouses — a vast den, of brick, capable of containing hundreds upon hundreds of paupers, and bags of oatmeal and potatoes innumerable.

It was the "board day," and a gentleman, who held office at this appropriately termed "Bastile," conducted us over the several sections of the interior. We had never entered the like before; and the first observation we ventured, was upon the animal, idiotic expression of two fourths of the inhabitants. One might have conceived, that Lavater himself, or Conolly of Hanwell, had selected the inmates of this physiognomical museum, on account of their vacuity and the individual portraits. It was the absence of hope which we perceived! — the blank which human faces are moulded to, when they tread as upon a plank drawn over a pit of darkness — with the extreme possibility of holding existence, uncomforted and in fear. What are they in fear of? — Of the rude voice, and the thundering reproof to the very semblance of an error — the mere crumbs of wrong which fall from their lips or appear in action. Alas! they are the dry bones thrown into the den of the bear — we mean, of



vulgar authority. Some were there we had known in the sunshine of their humble life, before misfortune and the grave, and the impatient landlord, had rifled their store of plenty and of peace: there was no distinction — they too were altered, as we have decribed. We saw many little children — stunted croppies, who had been kiln-dried out of all their poetical associations. The plasterer who whitewashes the miserable walls must have been commissioned to sweep them down from crown to chin, with a concentrated solution of lime. They were huddled together, the yellow ones and the white ones, as dull and as free from the wrinkles of mirth, as a basket full of stale eggs from the Welsh border. One child was nursed by an idiotic woman of a Mongolian cast of feature. Men have seen things in the glass of the astrologer which have turned their brains. The infant was a student in insanity, and there was a spark shooting up into the head of the young thing, from the evil eyes of the foster-parent, for ever near. There is as much ostentation in “an union” kitchen as if they were rivals of the comely abbeys of Croyland and Glastonbury before the Reformation. They remind us of the theatrical banquet-rooms, with tin fruits and wooden poultry, and their gorgeous beakers filled with emptiness and daubery.

A poor woman (“a fool,” we were told,) was filling the cans with water in the refectory, which is also the chapel; and we asked her what she was doing?

“A’ mockin’ the poor! A’ mockin’ the poor!” she answered peevishly. This is *no* imagination of ours: we declined further investigation.

Our friend, with infinite *nonchalance*, beckoned to a female to bring forward a child, an infant in her arms.

“There,” said he (as a schoolboy would show you a young plover in a hatful of hay)—“there, we’re *trying to rear* that child, and I think we shall succeed.”

“Mercy! (I adjoined) do you *never* rear children in the union?”

“This is *the first*, which has been without the mother, that has thrived,” he answered; “the others have gone off like winking.”

The subject spoken of, hung its pale head into its loose collar, and we perceived it was afflicted with strumous ophthalmia. During this exhibition, through an open door leading into a spacious garden, adorned with a bower and fish-pond, and parterres of fine flowers, we caught a glimpse of a child, frocked and frilled, its well-curled ringlets bouncing from its white shoulders with the exercise of the skipping rope. It was the governor’s child. Our guide would have conducted us still further, but we declined. “How is it,” we said, “that you do not provide a turf or a few trees to cheer the enclosures where those poor old folks sit, like stray creatures in a ‘pound,’ roasting in the noonday heat?”

“Very fine talking,” said he. “If you were here with your sympathy, in my situation, you’d pretty soon get ‘sacked’ by the guardians!”

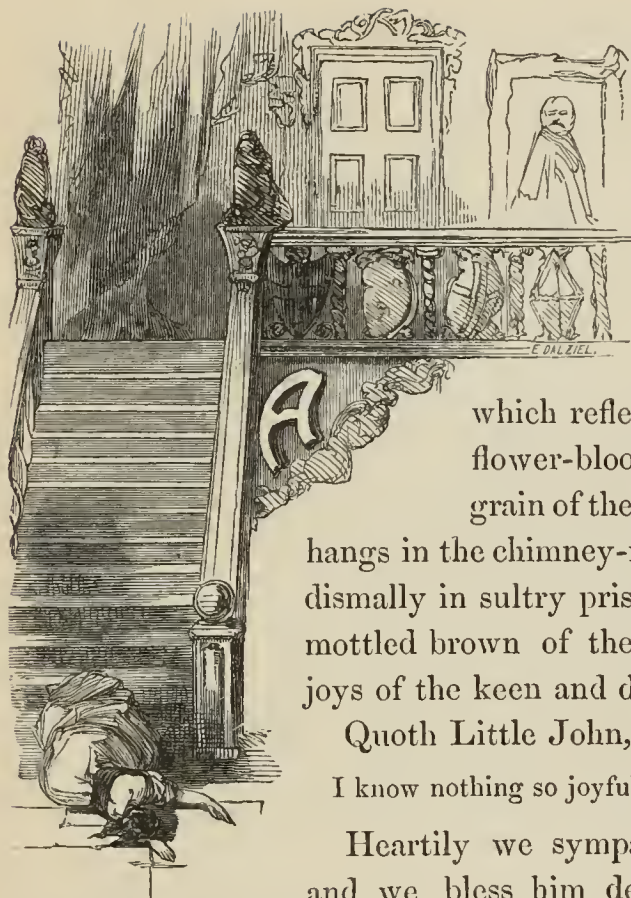
When we departed, the porch was thronged with meagre applicants — ragged youths, faint old women, and crippled men. We were much affected to see a hollow-eyed artisan drawn to the flight of steps in a rude wooden carriage. The wife tugged the vehicle in front; the children pushed behind; the favourite, a darling blue-eyed prattler, rode in perfect ecstasy between the knees of its pauper sire. What a triumph for a child! We abbreviate all recollections of “the union workhouse,” and we should like to live but for half an hour, in the distant future, when the *cicerone* shall lead some future king of Poland, or a Chinese professor, over the ruins of these “life extinguishers,” and talk of them in the same spirit that *we* speak of *Mexican sacrificial altars*, and an *arena* stained to its thirsty depth with the blood of the *martyrs* of the *Coliseum*. But — home, home, home! — we long to see the footsteps of our sportive girl printed in the soil of our welcome threshold; and we see the happy boundary through the waving trees. “I knew a father, fond as yourself (said my companion); he lived in the retirement of the country: he was a widower, and his perfect joy was an only child, with the features and the name of its departed mother. To sit within a rose-bower, and to read old books, with that ruddy creature sportive in the sunshine around, was the happiness of his solitary existence. An unhealthy wind, some blight upon the nerve, some venom germinating in the fountain of the heart, exiled the pitiful father from his paradise to the fever-chamber of the mournful favourite. ‘Heaven’s will be done!’ he said: but his lips were false, and the girl died. Evermore the garden was preserved — a wilderness, and the bower was enclosed with his own hands, and with a thorny barricade; and once a year — the day that he had lost his lily-flower! — he sat from morning until sunset, without food or comfort, fainting with grief, and sobbing until he made others weep, within the fresh alcove. Suddenly, and at his evening prayer, in the dark winter time, he fell a corpse, in the circle of his pious domestics, and with lamentations he was taken to a rural churchyard, and placed by the side of the forms he loved so dearly in the flesh. Now when those who were curious searched for the reason why that bower was closed in such security, they found in the pure sand of the unbroken floor the impressions of the footsteps of a little child! —” For a moment, at the tale of my companion, I shuddered and grew cold: but the shade was banished by returning light — the pilgrim was in the bosom of his home.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND WANDERING.—A MORNING IN EARLY JUNE.—A WALK FROM OXFORD.—CUMNOR AND “KENILWORTH.”—THE HALL AND ITS HISTORY.—THE TRUE STORY OF AMIE ROBSART.—SCOTT’S RESEARCHES FOR MATERIALS OF HIS ROMANCE.—MIEKLE’S BALLAD OF “CUMNOR HALL.”—THE VILLAGE.—THE BEAR AND RAGGED STAFF.—CUMNOR CHURCH.—ITS ANTIQUE BIBLE.—TONY FOSTER’S TOMB.—CURIOUS CARVINGS.—“THE BEAR AND ITS HOST.”—THE BLACK CROSS OF ST. HELEN’S.—STANTON.—THE KITCHEN.—POPE’S CHAMBER.—THE CHAPEL.—THE HARCOURTS.—THE CHAPEL OF STANTON HARCOURT.—STORY OF JOHN HEWET AND SARAH DREW.—THE GREAT HALL.—THE OLD STEWARD’S HISTORIES.—A LEGEND OF MILLICENT DE CAMOIL.—A DAME SCHOOL.



CHAPTER VI.



NOTHER stage of wandering—
another course of sunshine and
enjoyment, speedy foot, and light
heart, and ready staff—before
the orchards bend with blush-
ing fruit, and the long water-flag
droops yellow and decayed into
the mirror of the streamlet,

which reflected its earlier beauty; before the
flower-bloom has vanished from the swelling
grain of the wheaten stem; whilst yet the sickle
hangs in the chimney-nook, and the impatient setter howls
dismally in sultry prison, impatient for gaitered heels, the
mottled brown of the shifting birds, and the autumnal
joys of the keen and dazzling stubble-field.

Quoth Little John, in the old story of Robin Hood—

I know nothing so joyful in all the world as a morning in May!

Heartily we sympathise with that “forester green,”
and we bless him dearly for his love of nature. All
the sweet months of the year, and the songs of as many happy birds as sang
to our mother Eve in early Paradise, could not move some hearts in this
world, which are the victims of selfishness and a voluntary slavery—in youth,
in age, and until the gloom of death. It was *not* a “May morning,” truly,
but one of the earliest in June, when, in amicable union and delight, again
we measured paces together, and renewed our peaceful wanderings from the
city of Oxford.

The heavens were marked by many a filmy streak,
E'en in the orient, and the sun shone through
Those lines, as hope upon a mourner's cheek
Sheds, meekly chastened, her delightful hue.
From groves and meadows, all impearl'd with dew,
Rose silvery mist; no eddying wind swept by;
The cottage chimneys, half conceal'd from view
By their embow'ring foliage, sent on high
Their pallid wreaths of smoke, unruffled, to the sky.

We looked upon the learned place we left behind us,—mindful of the kind friend who had sheltered us there,—the “Island of Schools,” awaiting in solemn pride for the clearing of the mist, that its temples, and spires, and collegiate towers, might resume their glories with the welcome return of the glittering day. We were passing beyond the waters towards the south, bearing south-east of the “Home of the Magi,” over the chalked road of an ascending country. Our path was in deep tranquillity, only—ever and anon, when the highway presented more level footing, and the boundary was shadowy and green, and perfumed with the wild rose and sweet-fingered woodbine—we read to each other, in turn, passages from the “Kenilworth” of Sir Walter Scott—of the home of old Robsart, Tresilian at the cave, his heart’s dear lady! and the pageant of the castle. In imagination we heard sighs in the morning breeze, pitiful supplications, the cackling laughter of Flibbertigibbet, and the soft music of voice and lute, welcoming the Virago Queen, from her chamber of rest, to the garden maze, and to the adoration of that consummate villain whom it pleased her to denote as the favourite of the reign. At the distance of about three miles from the city before mentioned, we arrived at the pretty village of Cumnor, now and for ever, whilst stone can rest upon stone, rendered classical ground, and a place of exceeding interest, by the genius and the admirable fiction of the author of the Waverley novels, who painted for posterity more living pictures than time had seen since Sweet Will of Avon placed Ariel aloft and gave the hurricane its Lear, and night and ghostliness Prince Hamlet, with the earth-muttering phantom of his murdered sire.

Here prattled in the plenitude of their conceit *Giles Gosling* and swaggering *Mike Lambourn* to the Varneys and Tresilians, who, in company with right merry master *Goldthred* of Abingdon, quaffed pottles of sack and malmsey and cinnamon ales, and flung down freely their clinking angels, to the support of the grim-looking “bear” clinging sulkily to his ragged club upon the sign-tree at the threshold. Here the invalided monks of Abingdon spent their holidays, to the gratification of the community, who profited by their purse and store; and here (when the monks were gone) came sad things! for which many tears have fallen.

Tony Forster in his good fame bending basely to the vile counsel of his lord of Leicester, and standing mute in cold expectation, whilst miscreants, more savage than vulture or remorseless brute, laid cruel clutch upon the *Gentle Amie* of Cumnor Hall.

Travelling from Oxford over the several bridges, which are numerous, in the direction previously mentioned, you leave the Cheltenham road to the right

hand, and progressing, you make an easy turn to the right upon the summit of the hill, the clustering trees, and the sombre thatch of numerous primitive cottages, giving notice of your propinquity to this legendary locality.

Cumner, Cumnar, or Cumnor, is a vicarage in Berkshire, in the hundred of Hormer or Hornimere.

The fine eminence which is in this parish, and nearer to Oxford, was selected by the government in 1799 for their trigonometrical survey. The position is about 130 feet west of the clump of trees. This station was used, with Shotover station, for determining the place of the observatory at Oxford, whence is deduced its latitude.

51°	44'	2''	4	<i>North</i>
1	18	18	4	<i>South</i>
5	13	2		<i>West of Greenwich.</i>

Cumnor is situated on the fertile brow of a hill, which commands a fine view over the counties of Oxford and Gloucester. The parish extends about five miles in length, and four in breadth: there are several tributary hamlets, containing a few houses in each. The number of houses in the village and depending hamlets is somewhere about one hundred.

There is a mineral water here, formerly much resorted to for its cooling and laxative virtues.

The history of Cumnor is intimately connected with the records of the abbey of Abingdon, of which some mention must be made in connection with our subject.

The abbey of Abingdon (*abbaticè oppidum*) was founded about the year 675, by Heane, the nephew to Cissa, the viceroy of the Western Saxons. The monks forsook it in King Alfred's time, for fear of the Danes; but in 955 it was restored by King Edred and King Edgar, and under care of Ethelwold the abbot. Heanus was the first abbot.

The king of the Western Saxons, Cadwalla, gave twenty hides of land to the abbey, some parcels of which lay in Cumnor. In the "*Privilegium de Kenulfi, ex registro de Abbendon,*" we read of Cumnor with others thus: "*quorum infra nominantur nomina, Culanhom, Chenigton, Hengestseig, Cumanora,*" &c.: again, in the deed called "*Carta Edredi Regis,*"

"*Terras verò appendicias, quæ per loca diversa ad eandem villam pertinent.*"

id est, Gaineg x. Gosige x. Weorthe xxx. Cumenoran xxx. &c. The Dome-Boc says—

"*Terra Eccls. Abbendoniens.*

"*Abbatia de Abbendone tenet Comenore, semper fuit in Abbatia.*"

(Osbern and Rainald held lands there before the Norman seizure.) “Tempore Regis Edwardi se. defend: pro l. hid: modo pro xxx hid: Terra est l. Car: In dominio sunt ix. Car: et lx. villani et lix bord: c xxvi Car: Ibi iiij. servi et ij molini de l. solid: et de piscariis xl. solid: et cc acr. prati. Ibi CE ccllesia. TRE. valebat xxx lib: et post et modo l. &c. &c.”

Cumnor is mentioned likewise in “the Privilege of Pope Eugenius III.” The abbey and the abbots of Abingdon were immensely wealthy; for they had lands in Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, and Gloucestershire. The rents, at the suppression of monasteries, were about 2000*l.* a year! In the Comput. Ministrorum Domini Regis, temp. Hen. viij, we find, inter aliis,

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Comnor redd' Assis	0	13	2	X ^m , Garb et Feni	2	13	4 (field-tithe)
redd' ten' p Cop'	23	2	6	Penc', Vicar'	0	10	0
Divers' firm':	3	6	8	X ^m , Sarcin, et Ligni	0	7	0
				p quis' Cur':	3	3	4.

Amongst the abbots of Abingdon, we read of one William de Comenore, who died in 1333, soon after his temporalities, which had been withheld for certain reasons, had been restored to him. Thomas Pentecost, alias Rowland, was the last abbot, in 1530. He was probably named Pentecost from the season of his nativity, as the name “Pascal” has frequently been adopted for Catholic children born in the Easter time. He with his monks subscribed to King Harry’s supremacy, and resigned the abbey to his commissioners. Some of the bitter Calvinistical writers and teachers accused him of great immorality; but even Old Dry-bones! old conforming Leland, says that the king himself declared him to be an innocent man, settling upon him 200*l.* per annum, for his life, and giving him likewise, for the same term, the whole capital mansion of Cumnor, and also other lands.

In Leland’s *Collectanea*, Hearne’s edition, vol. vi. and p. 195. we find the surrender of the abbey transcribed from the Latin; also the grant of Cumnor, which is more to our purpose:

“Nos volentes rationabilem annualem pensionem,” &c.

In this, besides the pension of 200*l.* for a compensation, set forth in letters patent, bearing date the last day of February, and 29th year of the reign, the whole capital mansion of Cumnor is given to Thomas Rowland, with the dwellings and stables, granaries, dove cotes, and other buildings adjacent and appertaining, and a close of ground also, called “Cumnor Park,” with some other lands “in ejus rei,” &c. &c.

If the king presented him to one benefice or more, equal in value to 223*l.*, these letters of provision were thenceforth void. This Thomas Pentecost, alias Rowland, resided until his decease at Cumnor Place, and he died in the time of King Edward VI. His will was proved April 21, 1540, in which he prayed that his bones might rest in the chancel of Cumnor church. His arms, impaling those of his monastery, occur in the Harleian MS. No. 1139, art. 6th. They are included in the abbey seal, for which you may refer to Dugdale's *Monasticon*, where it has been engraved.

Cumnor House, or Cumnor Hall, appears to have been the country residence of the abbots of Abingdon, or the rectorial residence. Some have smiled malignantly at the conceit that it was a cell, or a place of retreat, used during the prevalence of pestilential disease around the vicinity of the mother establishment; but it must be remembered that plague and fatal epidemics were then of frequent occurrence. Famine was a frequent foe; and the poor people dying in the typhoid state, which destitution occasioned, bequeathed their unburied carcasses as a swift vengeance to their neighbours, who fattened upon forestalled markets and much greedy thrift into the bargain.

"Boards of health," and facetious, note-taking "commissioners of inquiry," were scarce in those days of warlike and devotional impulse. The infected Italian landed on English ground, unquestioned and unfumigated; and if the kennel stagnated into a source of miasm by the pauper's door (pauper! is the modern word), there was no well-paid odour-monger to ask the reason why?

Instancing this, "*In 1343,*" says a notable antiquarian, "*there was a conjunction of Saturn and Mars, and plagues reigned hotly through Europe. Wallingford then had twelve churches, and now, alas! (1586,) it has only two churches.*"

The ruined styles and blocks of several stone crosses, which may still be seen in different directions through this parish, remain memorials of its monastic possessors, who always honoured Cumnor with signal marks of their favour and munificence. They had a judicious predilection for the salubrious estate of their own.

In the year 1546, the king, Henry VIII., by letters patent, granted to George Owen, Esq., and Dr. John Bridges, "the lordship, manor, and rectorial tythes of Cumner, with all its rights and appurtenances; and particularly the capital messuage called Cumner Place, and the close adjoining, called Cumner Park, and also the three closes called Saffron Plottys (plots)." After this period, it passed by various grants into the family of the Earl of Abingdon, to whom the parish now belongs.

About the year 1811, the old Hall, after changing masters, (all in the

deseending line, as one might tell,) became tottering and untenantable, and it was in such wretched condition, that it was ordered to be taken down by the Earl. There is a very correct sketch of the venerable structure, as it existed previous to the demolition in Lysons' "Berkshire." The principal entrance was at the north side, facing the southern walls of the church. A long gallery occupied the middle story of that side of the building. The painted glass from the ancient windows, and the entrance gateway, are preserved at Wytham. The tradition of the place is known almost too well to claim a repetition.

The true Story of Amie, Countess of Leicester.

Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, was one of the gallants and especial favourites of the "Virgin Queen" Elizabeth,—the true child of her father, and as fiery a coquette as ever twirled a fluttering petitioner at the slender point of female finger of governance. It was her ungenerous policy, surrounded by noblemen of form and fashion, professing to live but in the lustre of her attractions, to work these sycophants and ambitious persons the one against the other, so that, in the chances and the confusion of their contention, she might enjoy her privilege of flinging off to the wall—aye, and to the scaffold!—the man of most dangerous pre-eminence. It has been said of Leicester,—“he was too mean to be noble—too vain to be truly great.” He had a bad heart, and a boundless aim. His poisonings and treacheries were common parlance in the correspondence of the period. He had all minor vices in due blending, and he was a hypocrite; so much so, that by voice and outward demeanour he played the Puritan, won the favour of the Puritanical party, and was deemed by the insensate knaves to be a saintly master of their godly undertakings. This man had been offered as a husband to Mary the Queen of Scotland, perhaps to test his devotion to her bitter relative; for Elizabeth had listened to his most fervent protestations, and we may think that she loved him, until, by the truth which accompanies all deceit, she had seen the dark hollowness of his heart. On June the 4th day, in the year 1550, there was a feasting at Court. This, of course, was in the time of King Edward VI. Sir Robert Dudley (the Earl) stood espoused to Amie, the daughter of Sir John Robsart, at the mansion of Sheen in Surrey; the young monarch honouring the nuptials with his gracious presence. The bride was a considerable heiress, descended of a noble family in Norfolk; one of her ancestors by the father's side having been a peer of the realm in the reign of Henry V., and two of them knights

of the most noble order of the Garter, in the reigns of that prince and of his son. Now, ten years after this, the vain Lord was in the ascendant: to use an expression of the venerable alchemists,—his work “*had been concocted not only ‘Die Jovis,’ but likewise ‘Horâ Jovis,’*” and had succeeded bravely. England held two queens, young, and without husbands: thinking of which, the good fair young wife, which holy church had given unto him, became loathsome and detestably inconvenient; and when he looked the less upon her beautiful face, and the more upon his own scheme of power, the more he longed to throw her far away from his worship and good remembrance. Good men have their guardian angels; the spirits of the evil are of their own bad similitude. One Sir Richard Varney, a lacquey, of base origin, was near to him,—a creature in his daily retinue, and counselled to his own fancy by this varlet, he meditated Amie’s destruction, imagining that a speedy participation in the regal dignity would prove a sufficient placebo for the intermitting spasms of an uneasy conscience. Anthony Forster, a gentleman of repute whom he had served in his need with sundry plump offices, resided then at Cumnor Place. With bland persuasions, and his adopted Puritanical face, he first persuaded his poor tender lady wife, who grew deadly faint with increasing negligences, to take up her residence for a while at that healthful mansion. She went, in obedience to him, and the net was around her, nearer and more dangerously day after day. There are some letters extant, which have been wickedly rehearsed, as indicating her homely mind, and her distance in mental qualifications from her courtly husband; and, forsooth, they refer to her notes transmitted to Leicester, concerning “her fleeces,” her “farming items,” and other such matronly simplicities. Who is so far removed from skill of human hearts, as not to perceive that the despised sweetheart of other days was striving to recall her truant lord to domestic scenes, and to display her anxiety for his interest, manifested even in the small things of his estate and revenue? But be as it will, her doom was near. First, these forward agents of patronised villany tried to poison her; but Doctor Bayly of Oxford, who was called in to give aid to the exertion, refused to co-operate, and he was dismissed with contumely and much opprobrium. Her melancholy increased, every face was turned from her, and disease was engendered in her wearied frame. Like the sad woman in Tennyson’s poem of the “Moated Grange,” (that song of few words, but of so many thoughts of desolation;)—

“ Her tears fell with the dews at even,
 “ Her tears fell ere the dews were dried,
 “ She could not look on the sweet heaven,
 “ Either at morn or eventide.

" After the flitting of the bats,
 " When thickest dark did trance the sky,
 " She drew her curtain casement by,
 " And glanced athwart the glooming flats ;
 " She only said, ' The night is dreary,
 " ' He cometh not,' she said :
 " She said, ' I am weary, weary,
 " I would that I were dead ! ! ' "

On the 8th day of September, 1560, they persuaded the timid Lady Leicester to change her sleeping apartment, for one of better convenience on their own account, the canopy of her bed lying near to a postern door opening from the wall. The servants were all commanded off upon various embassies to Abingdon, a town some few miles distant. Indeed, it was market-day at Abingdon, and the day was as fair as if none but angels lived in the sunshine, and all good and unfortunate people were protected by the smile of a wondrous Providence. At the evening hour it was her custom, oppressed by languor and mental pain, to retire for rest to her chamber ; and on this occasion, also, she laid down once for all to her portion of slumber. Sir Richard Varney and a brutal serving man, (and Master Anthony Forster it is narrated) entered upon tiptoe by the secret way, and like hideous devils, as they were, they grasped her slender ivory throat, and strangled her !

Lady Dudley's Chamber, as it was called ever after, was above that very room which formerly lay beyond the "great hall." Now there was a flight of broad stone steps at the western end of the northern gallery, which led directly down into the quadrangle, and to the same hall, which was at right angles to the large gallery ; and at the foot of these stone steps they placed the lifeless body of Amie, the murdered wife of Lord Leicester—pretending that she had been killed by falling from above, as if she had been sorely crazed and wo-begone. When the domestics returned from Abingdon, the moment they entered the hall the body was shown to them ; but in their surprise they knew not that the scull was perfect, and they did not perceive that the pretty hood she used to wear was unruffled and not displaced by the violence of the pretended accident. Afterwards this was mentioned, and dreadful suspicions were nurtured, and soon expressed ; and when the tidings reached her venerable father, he guessed the worst, and procured that his child's body should be disinterred, because it had been deposited in a tomb with unseemly haste. There was a coroner's inquest, but gold suppressed the truth, and the corpse was re-interred at Oxford in the church of St. Mary, with a pomp and solemnity, ordained by Leicester, to announce the love which he bore to his departed dame. The base wretch who actually strangled her, was impri-

soned for a felony upon the borders of Wales, and desiring to unburden his conscience of the murder, he was made away with privately in his dungeon. Varney, according to authentic information, died soon afterwards in London, blaspheming God upon his death-bed, and declaring that he was ripped into fragments by devils from hell! and when Bald Butler's wife, who was related by marriage to the Earl of Leicester, approached her dying hour, she made a confession of the entire villany.

Here is an end to the true story. Amie died two years after Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne. Leicester then married privately, in 1572, the youthful widow of Lord Sheffield, formerly the Lady Douglas Howard—daughter of William Lord Howard, the Queen's uncle. Both of these ladies lived, by his artful contrivances, in a most private manner; and he would have destroyed the second wife, but her potion of deadly pharmacy was ineffectual, and deprived her only of her health temporarily, and of her luxuriant hair, and the nails of her hands and feet. He afterwards married Lady Essex, which marriage was grievously offensive to his royal taskmistress; and, to conclude, report says he was at length poisoned, too late in life, by a draught administered in error by his wife at Cornbury Lodge—some say positively at Kenilworth Castle, this occurring in 1588. Sir Walter Scott, previous to his final arrangement of the materials of "Kenilworth," visited Cumnor, where he is well remembered, and with his accustomed sagacity, he rifled from the church and churchyard the names of Tony Forster, and Mike Lambourne.

The fiction of the novel is most evident, in the character of Forster, which is a pure invention, to say the best of it; and Amie, having deceased so early in the reign of Elizabeth, must be necessarily released from participation in those chapters of the book which refer to Kenilworth. It was Lady Sheffield he attempted to poison upon the Queen's visit to the Castle, because, as Miss Strickland observes, in a note to her "Lives of the Queens of England,"—"he had then fallen in love with Lettie Knollys (Knowles), cousin of the Queen, and then wife to Walter Devereux, the Earl of Essex, and mother of that Earl afterwards a minion of the Queen's." The two women were called his "old and new testaments," perhaps because he had *sworn* to both of them. This second wife was afterwards married to Sir Edward Stafford. Forster, who had been a cheerful, hospitable, open-hearted gentleman, before he participated in this deadly crime, grew sickly, reserved, and melancholy, and very soon afterwards he drooped into the grave. About this time, and even until the destruction of the tenement, ghosts were frequent at Cumnor Place; and often, they say, the spectre of poor Amie Leicester, attired in courtly

apparel, pearls and brocade, was seen to linger in faint beautiful coloured light upon the great stairs at nightfall. The place was abhorred, even until it was forsaken.

It would make us very sad, even now, could we "hear all the grievous things which were whispered around, when the knell tolled in the gray tower, and Master Anthony was borne, with plumes and staves, and men in sable weeds, from that small arch still existing in the ivied wall, to his grave, deep scooped in the chancel floor." Surely, if his own phantom floated through the habitation he had resigned, by winter or by summer's twilight, the ghost of Amie would not be there; for purity and vice in another world have wider separation than here, and no spell in immortal life can bring together the being whose music is the hymn of beatitude, and the fiend whose fetters quiver in the light of eternal flame.

Mickle's ballad tells the unhappy Countess's story in such pathetic strains, that we need not apologise for its insertion.

Cunnor Hall.

The dews of summer night did fall ;
The moon (sweet regent of the sky)
Silvered the walls of Cunnor Hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby.

Now nought was heard beneath the skies
(The sounds of busy life were still),
Save an unhappy lady's sighs,
That issued from that lonely pile.

"Leicester," she cried, "is this thy love
That thou so oft hast sworn to me,
To leave me in this lonely grove,
Immured in shameful privy ?

No more thou com'st with lover's speed,
Thy once beloved bride to see ;
But be she alive, or be she dead,
I fear, stern Earl, 's the same to thee.

Not so the usage I received
When happy in my father's hall ;
No faithless husband then me grieved,
No chilling fears did me appal.

I rose up with the cheerful morn,
No lark so blithe, no flower more gay ;
And like the bird that haunts the thorn,
So merrily sung the live long day.

If that my beauty is but small,
 Among court ladies all despised,
 Why didst thou rend it from that hall,
 Where, scornful Earl, it well was prized.

And when you first to me made suit,
 How fair I was you oft would say!
 And proud of conquest, plucked the fruit,
 Then left the blossom to decay.

Yes! now neglected and despised,
 The rose is pale, the lily's dead:
 But he that once their charm so prized,
 Is sure the cause those charms are fled.

For know, when sickening grief doth prey,
 And tender love's repaid with scorn,
 The sweetest beauty will decay:
 What floweret can endure the storm?

At court, I'm told, is beauty's throne,
 Where every lady's passing rare,
 That eastern flowers, that shame the sun,
 Are not so glowing, not so fair.

Then, Earl, why didst thou leave the beds,
 Where roses and where lilies vie,
 To seek a primrose, whose pale shades
 Must sicken when those gauds are by?

'Mong rural beauties I was one!
 Among the fields wild flowers are fair;
 Some country swain might me have won,
 And thought my passing beauty rare.

But, Leicester, (or I much am wrong),
 It is not beauty lures thy vows:
 Rather ambition's gilded crown,
 Makes thee forget thy humble spouse.

Then, Leicester, why, again I plead —
 (The injured surely may repine),
 Why didst thou wed a country maid,
 When some fair princess might be thine?

Why didst thou praise my humble charms,
 And oh! then leave them to decay?
 Why didst thou win me to thy arms,
 Then let me mourn the live long day?

The village maidens of the plain
 Salute me lowly as they go;
 Envious they mark my silken train,
 Nor think a Countess can have woe.

The simple nymphs ! they little know
 How far more happy's their estate ;
 To smile for joy, than smile for woe ;
 To be content, than to be great.

How far less blessed am I than them,
 Daily to pine and waste with care !
 Like the poor plant, that, from its stem
 Divided, feels the chilling air.

Nor, cruel Earl, can I enjoy,
 The humble charms of solitude ;
 Your minions proud my peace destroy,
 By sullen frowns or pratings rude.

Last night as sad I chanced to stray,
 The village death-bell smote my ear ;
 They winked aside, and seemed to say,
 " Countess, prepare — thy end is near."

And now, while happy peasants sleep,
 Here I sit lonely and forlorn ;
 No one to soothe me as I weep,
 Save Philomel on yonder thorn.

My spirits flag, my hopes decay,
 Still that dread death-bell smites my ear ;
 And many a body seems to say,
 " Countess, prepare — thy end is near."

Thus sore and sad that lady grieved,
 In Cumnor Hall so lone and drear ;
 And many a heart-felt sigh she heaved,
 And let fall many a bitter tear.

And ere the dawn of day appeared,
 In Cumnor Hall, so lone and drear ;
 Full many a bitter scream was heard,
 And many a cry of mortal fear.

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
 An aerial voice was heard to call,
 And thrice the raven flapped his wing
 Around the towers of Cumnor Hall.

The mastiff howled at village door,
 The oaks were shattered on the green,
 Wo was the hour, for never more
 That hapless Countess e'er was seen.

And in that manor now no more
 Is cheerful feast or sprightly ball ;
 For ever since that dreary hour
 Have spirits haunted Cumnor Hall.

The village maids, with fearful glance,
 Avoid the ancient moss-grown wall ;
 Nor ever lead the merry dance
 Among the groves of Cumnor Hall.

Full many a traveller has sighed,
 And pensive wept the Countess' fall,
 As wandering onwards they've espied
 The haunted towers of Cumnor Hall.

You enter the village of Cumnor from a deep and narrow road with an only footpath to the right of the causeway, a lengthened wall upon your left defending the gardens, &c. in the rearward of the rectory, a similar stone fence opposite forming a mossy boundary to pleasant orchards terraced by nature above the main road.



The Bear and Ragged Staff.

One of the first of the thatched dwellings, upon your right in the opening space at the immediate entrance upon the central village, is the celebrated hostelry of "The Bear and Ragged Staff," a snug tavern, kept in clean good order by *our* friend Mr. Capel, who is also a timber-merchant and wheel-

wright. He is a sample of good nature, and a specimen of Oxfordshire strength and comeliness—a rare good host, in plain fashion, for men after our own unceremonious ways. The walls of this house are manifestly the ancient walls. Go into the timber-yard, and, close by the door, you may look down to a deep rudely arched window or grating of the cellarage, the vaults of which have smelt syllabub, and venison pasty, warden-pic, and the skins full of sack and canary, from lands beyond the seas. At the “Bear” we were directed to the cottage of the parish clerk, who resides by the way-side, where the single main street of the humble picturesque village branches off into contrary directions (like one side of the letter X) at the western extremity. The poor decrepid man, who had borne the keys of office before the “wizard of Caledonia,” crushed with age, and sapless in infirmity, sat crooning over the embers of a doubtful fire, helpless, and absorbed altogether in the obscurities and films of dotage. One of his grand-children, a bluff little damsel, bonnetted in haste at the direction of her mother, and accompanied us to the sanctuary. Several small mousy-faced children of the family winked and smiled at us from the bread-and-cheese table. A school of four yawning smock-frocked urchins lolled and yerked about indolently upon a swing bench, placed for general convenience against the patched wall of the apartment. Mutilated and carefully dog-eared stores of rudimentary literature were scattered upon the floor, and ranged upon the shelves and window-places; we caught a glimpse of the wooden face of “Mr. Vyse” in one of the volumes, and surveyed some woodcuts of primitive excellence in a sensible little book, which sets forth how—

“The naughty boy who steals the pears,
“Is whipped as well as he who swears.”

“Very few scholars to day!” we said to the woman.

“I shud have a many to day, Sur, but they be dra’d off fur zomething;—we be very shart o’ scholards in the summer time, ’cos then they be wanted to goo a vieldin,’ but in winter, Sur, they be a smartish lot on ’um! bless the Lard!—they mostly edicates, Zur, in the cold weather, Zur!—that’s the time, Zur; they be but a sprint’lin just na-ow!”

We smiled, and pursued the small ochry elbows of the minute girl who preceded us. The open road of the village at the entrance is excavated in the stone, which is the foundation of the eminence. The hostelrie of the “Bear” is upon your right hand; as we have repeated, the church of Cumnor stands upon the ascending ground of a picturesque churchyard, directly opposite. Behind the church are the mere boundaries, and the lines

of the terraces and garden embankments of the ancient hall. The clustering hovels and cottages and small farms of the village are upon the diverging road. The residences in the centre of the place are mostly clean-thatched buildings, of considerable age, and they have plots of flower-garden before them, adorned with clematis and huge hollyhock and with slender sweet willows and sweet-williams, the very pride of all. There is a graceful diversity; some patronise a *lignum vitæ*, some a fruitful juniper: and jasmins and passion-flowers alternate with less presumptive verdure, in the rear of gorgeous rose trees and the proud sceptres of blushing dahlia. The burial-ground is open to the north and east, where it is partially skirted by a few light whispering trees. The style of the ancient cross remains amongst the mossy tombstones. There are many pleasing epitaphs carven upon the gravestones, and upon the flat wooden rails which are stretched across the mournful turf. There is a remembrance of "John East—a very skilful shepherd, who lived in the service of one family upwards of sixty years." Honour to his fidelity! The moon shall look down upon the frozen sheep-folds, but the youthful shepherd shall watch in vain for the tall and shadowy form, with the mantled frieze and wonted crozier, pacing by the dim hill-side. He is gone, and the wintry winds shall whisper their serious homily to something less true and dutiful and hopeful than the heart of old John East.

The church is a reverend building;—structure upon structure, and repairs

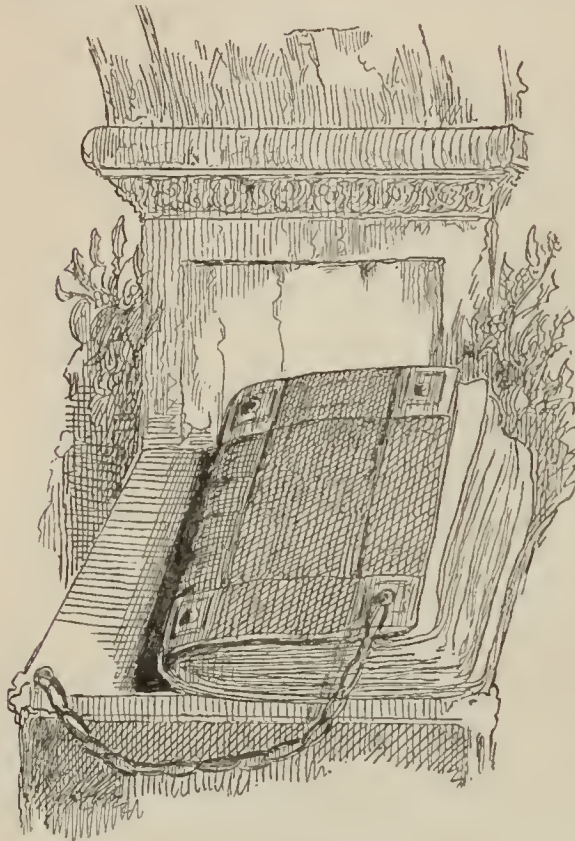


Cumnor Church.

upon improvements, at distant periods, with numerous architectural diversities. With the northern porch, it is cruciform. The northern aisle was formerly dedicated to St. Thomas, and the southern to St. Katherine. The north porch is the entrance to a diminished aisle. At the eastern extremity of this aisle is an enclosed space formerly a small chapel; to the west there is a double-arched window. To the right

of the porch, interiorly and in the northern wall, is a window, in the quatrefoil tracery of which, over the arched divisions, you see a portion of painted glass representing a lady before her desk at devotions. She wears the costume of the 16th century. The inscription in old character was dusty and illegible. The aisle is separated from the nave by massive round pillars

supporting three bold arches of solid masonry. Near to the western end of the north aisle is a curious old Bible, mightily bound with wood and iron;



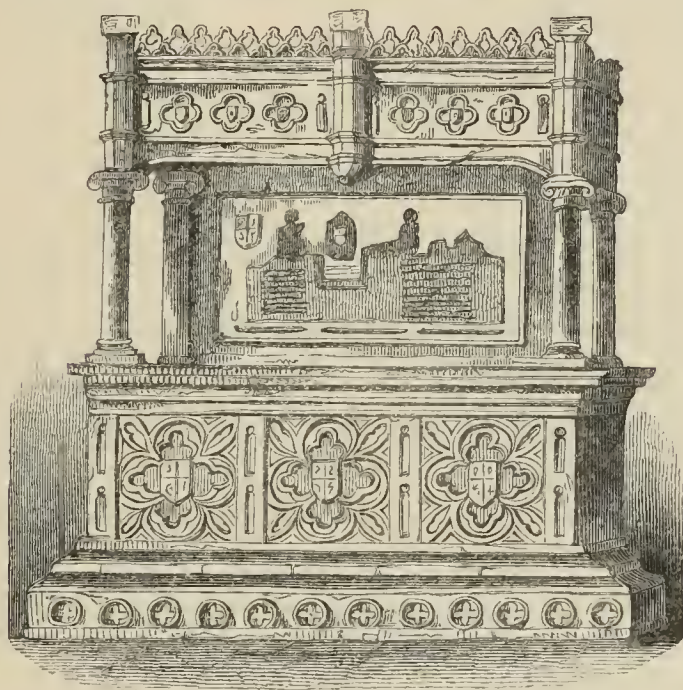
Chained Bible, Cumnor.

it is chained to the desk-board of a pew. Several names are embossed and indented upon the sombre covers of the ponderous volume. It was printed early in the reign of James I., containing, by way of preface, a history of the preceding translations of the Scripture. Upon the south wall are several tablets and inscriptions. The gallery is a very ugly wooden contrivance, athwart the lofty deeply moulded internal archway of the western porch, and immediately over a cumbrous font of equal deformity. The chancel is lighted by several narrow side windows. The eastern window consists of three lancet divisions, surmounted by as many quatrefoils. There are tablets upon the floor of the chancel (without the

communion) in brass and stone, to the Southbys and Bakers, and others of the former race of gentility; and within the communion rails are outlines and inscriptions upon brass to "Edythe Staverton" and "Katheryne Staverton," related to the wife of Anthony Forster. His tomb is upon the north side of the chancel — a monument of grey marble, surmounted by a canopy of the same, and supported by two pillars. On the back of this tomb and under the embattled canopy (as represented) upon brass are engraved a man in armour and his wife, in the habit of the times, both kneeling before a faldstool, with figures of three children kneeling behind their mother. The inscription under the armed figure runs thus:—

Antonius Forster generis generosa propago,
 Cumnerae dominus. Barcherensis erat:
 Armiger. Armigero prognatus patre Ricardo,
 Qui quondam Ephlethae Salopiensis erat.
 Quatuor ex isto fluxerunt stemmate nati
 Ex isto Antonius stemmate quartus erat:
 Mente sagax, animo praececellens, corpore promptus,
 Eloquio dulcis, ore disertus erat.

En factis probitas fuit, in sermone venustas,
 En vultu grabitas, religione fides,
 En patriam pietas, in egenos grata voluntas
 Accedunt reliquis, annumeranda bonis.
 Sic quod cuncta rapuit, rapuit non omnia lethum,
 Sed quae mors rapuit, bibida fama dedit.



Anthony Forster's Tomb.

Underneath the figure of his lady are these lines in old character: —

Anna Rainoldo Williams fuit orta parente,
 Obasit meritis armiger ille suis.
 Sed minor huic frater praestante laude Baronis
 Chamensis biguit gloria magna soli.
 Armiger ergo pater Dominus sed abunculus Annae :
 Clara erat heis meritis clarior Anna suis,
 Casta virgo, studiosa Dei, dilecta propinquis,
 Stirpe beata satis, prole beata satis.
 Mater Joannis, mediaque aetate, Roberti,
 Et demum Henrici nobilis illa parens
 Cynthia, Penelope tumulo clauduntur in isto.
 Ann sed hoc tumulo sola sepulta jacet.

The first of these epitaphs describes the pedigree, the intellect, eloquence, piety, activity, patriotism, and benevolence of Master Anthony. The second in off-hand style lauds the gentility, chastity, devotion, and kindness of his dame. The six following lines are written beneath the foregoing in praise of Forster himself: —

Argutæ resonas citharæ prætereundere chordas
 Nobis et Aconia concepuisse lyra,
 Gaudebat terræ teneras defigere plantas,
 Et mira pulchras construere arte domos,
 Composita varias lingua formare loquelas
 Doctus, et edocta scribere multa manu.

Thus englished in Ashmole:—

“ Skill'd in the softest notes the muses sing,
 Or on the harp to touch the sounding string;
 Pleas'd with the florist's tender-nursing care,
 Or architect, stupendous piles to rear.
 Read in the tongues the ancient sages taught,
 And learned works confess how well he wrote.”

Is this hireling mendacity?—who can declare? and would such qualities, if real, counterbalance the sin of murder at the tribune of Divine justice?—who would pause to consider the question? not I! What a plaintive eloquent epitome of the Countess of Leicester's murder, and of the character of her murderers, would Dante have made, he who told “of the poor suspected lady exiled to the pestilential marshes, where she shortly expired:” the Donna Pia tells us that “he who placed the ring upon her hand knew how she died,” and we know nothing more, seeing in a few plaintive words her terrible history.

The arms upon Tony Forster's tomb are these:—

Quarterly { 3 Hunters' horns stringed.
 3 Pheons (javelin heads) points upwards.

The arms over the head of Dame Forster are as follows:—

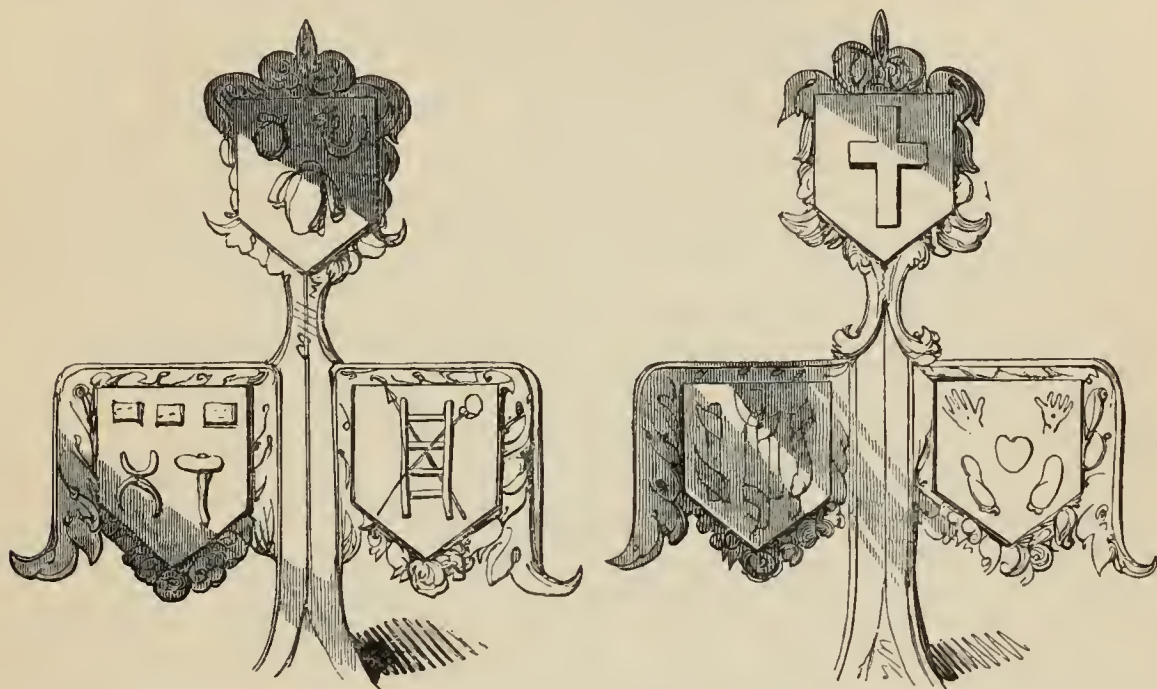
Quarterly { 1. Two organ-pipes in saltire between 4 crosses paté.
 2. A raven.
 3. A chevron ermine, between three lions' heads erased within a border of roundelle, and on a chief bar a pale charged with a pelican.
 4. As the first.

At the foot of Forster's tomb lie the brasses before mentioned, upon slabs which cover the remains of two of the daughters of Rainold Williams, of Forster's wife's family; the following is one of the inscriptions in old characters:—

“*Hedythe Staberton daughter to Raynold Williams
 Of Borsfeld in the County of Berks Esquier.*”

The other is imperfect, indeed almost illegible. The Piscina or Lavatory remains in the southern wall of the sanctuary or communion, which is plainly wainscotted in good churchwarden style. The carvings upon the seats in the chancel are curious and interesting; there are toads and human heads, and

two remarkable faces of a broad oaken escutcheon, rising laterally from one of the seats, displaying the emblems usually termed the "Instruments of the Passion," so frequently to be met with on the stone-work of religious edifices,



Pew Ornaments, Cumnor.

upon tombs, upon the clasps of books, and in embroidered altar-work;—such are the "motley vest," and "Christ's seamless garment;" the "reed and sponge;" the "lance;" the "dice;" the "lantern of Judas;" the "scourge;" the "pillar;" the "cock" which rebuked Peter, &c.

In the south transept of Cumnor Church are two ancient low tombs bearing the "floral cross;" they lie to the ground between the origin of two ornamented arches, which front a recess within the wall. These are supposed to contain so much as may there remain of the "mortal husk" of two of the abbots of Abingdon. In this transept there is a mural inscription to the memory of "Benjamin Buckler, D. D., Vicar of the Parish," whose honest principles, it is said, contended adversely "to his worldly interests,"—an apostolical character and an eulogium much to be cherished and preserved, though we believe thee, friend Buckler, to have been somewhat liberal in politics, and to have cut off kindly aid from less sociable people in the "City of Bookmen" so very near to Cumnor. Upon the south wall of the body of the church as you leave the transept, read the following upon a dingy brass. It commences in prosy style with the accustomed set-forth:—

"The bodye of James Welshe lyeth buried here,
Who left this mortal lyfe at fourscore yeare,

One thousande and six hundred twelve he dyed,
 And for the poore did Christainlie provide ;
 Accordinge to the talent God had lente.
 Five pounds he gave of zeale and goode intente :
 The fruit makes known the nature of the tree—
 Good life the Christian — even soe was he,
 Whose tyme well spent, unto his soul did gayne
 The heavenlie rest, where holie saints remain.”

(It runs then in ancient ballad metre.)

“ This memory a lovyng wife unto her husband gave,
 To show her heart remembers him, though death inclose his grave ;
 The gift he gave unto the poore she hath enlarged y^e same,
 With five pounds added to his five, unto his Christian fame.
 Hath placed them both to the churchmen here, no wise to be delayed,
 But that yearly to the poore of Cumnor bee a marke of silver paid,
 Which is the full appointed rent of the whole bequeath-ed sum,
 And so for ever shall remaine until the day of doome.
 In Cumner for the poore’s relief Margary Walsh doth will
 The charge of this when she is dead may be performed still.”

Nearer to the gallery on the same wall close to a window is a mural tablet, adorned, to the memory of one “ Norris Hodson, Shipwright and Mariner, and one of Anson’s crew in the squadron of 1741 ;” he was buried in the South Sea, and rests hoping for that day “ when the sea shall give up its dead.” There are several inscriptions in the enclosure of the north aisle, to



Pew Ornament, Cumnor.

the deceased of the “ Peacock ” family, and upon a seat near to the rails is an interesting carving, well-worked, of a young Seraph, with the wings in the usual manner counter-placed to the back of another figure upon the summit of the pew. Much time might be spent in this interesting edifice with increasing fervour. The western entrance of the heavy tower is of early date ;—a low round arch of many retreating mouldings, with two slender pillars of simple capital to the outer division. The tower is in itself a strong square buttressed erection with lancet windows. A moulding of alternate heads and floral ornaments courses, cornice-wise, below the parapet of the main building.

I loitered to those scanty ruins which denote the outbuilding of old Cumnor Place, and from the western wall of the cemetery

curtained with festoons of luxuriant ivy I looked upon the dikes and terraces of the forlorn garden-grounds, and that slender provision of trees which apologises for the departed honours of the goodly park. The titled miscreant, garbed in court attire, started as in ones dreaming from every sheltering nook of the legendary enclosure. Anthony Forster—not the villain of Sir Walter, but the accomplished gentleman of our chancel eulogy, sang to the lute from the mullioned casement of the fine gallery of the noble hall, now rising visibly to the enchantments of ideality. Amie plaited love-knots for her faithless husband in the lonesome chamber of her grief, singing old songs of doleful minstrelsy:—

“ When cockle-shells turn siller bells,
 And museles grow on every tree;
 When frost and snow sall warm us a’,
 Then sall my love prove true to me !”

(or)

“ Blow, blow, thou winter wind !
 Thou art not so unkind
 As man’s ingratitude,”

we respond to her lamentation.

Tressilian we saw loitering near in venturous masquerade, and we heard the hoarse blustering repartees of fuddled Mike Lambourne, blended with the oily rebuke of courteous uncle Gosling, at the adjoining hostelrie. Day dreams are soon broken; my eye rested upon the pretty cottages, with their comfortable, cosey, perforated thatch and shadowed chambers, whose windows peeped bashfully through the straw-woof drawn closely around them. Cattle and their young variegated the landscape with pleasant hues, and crowded together in the fold-yards; the simple ballad of the house-wife fell softly upon the ear with a world of changeful artless cadences, and gradually the sight was weaned away from the immediate scenery to the green links of undulating woodland which lead to the faintly blue horizon, where far distant hills swell so gently into the heavenward space around them.

We then sauntered deliberately through the whole village, and threaded its lanes and foredroughs, and intricate footpaths. The ancient ivied grange with its ornamented casements delayed us for a while; the carved portico of a humbler dwelling also claimed consideration, and numerous objects of lesser interest welcomed us as we wandered our simple way. After a humble repast at the “Brown Bear” the landlord accepted an invitation to a right-loving cup in the green old parlour. The rustic who conveyed the invitation was fondly occupied in excising the lingering tough morsels from a half-denuded bladebone of mutton. “Rather a shaded sky and a cold wind for the afternoon, master!” we hailed him.

“ Oh ees, ees, sur !” said he, “ the blaw’s skipping across the grin-sward, and a’ dessay he’ll gna afoor night.”

Upon my word it was a poetical way of expressing “ the light cold wind over the turf,” and his “ dare say” that there would be a dash of cold, like frost in the air at nightfall, for so we understood the “ gnawing” he mentioned. The parlour of the inn, as we noticed, is a queer snuggerly. The roof or cieling would knock off the hat of any visiter above 5 feet 4 inches in stature. It is hung round with generals and dames, done in the coloured engraving of the last century. A fox-tail is the handle of the bell-rope. In one corner we soon espied the last old sign of “ Bear and Ragged Staff,” falling to pieces under the fingers of time.

“ After Sir Walter was here,” said the host, “ some of ‘ *the scholars*’ insisted upon having that old sign hoisted with the name ‘ Giles Gosling!’ attached to it; but it was a rickety concern, and has seen its best days in rain and shine at the tavern. I shall preserve it under shelter for the future.”

Forthwith it was hoisted upon the table, and we drank to its reverence in a bumper.

“ Why,” said we, “ landlord! it’s no more like a bear, than old ‘ Tony Fire-the-Faggot’ is like your Squire Forster of Cumnor!”

“ I never saw a bear in my life,” he answered; “ but the ‘ *scholars*’ often told me it was something that mocked a bear.”

“ Why don’t you hang out a better-formed one?”

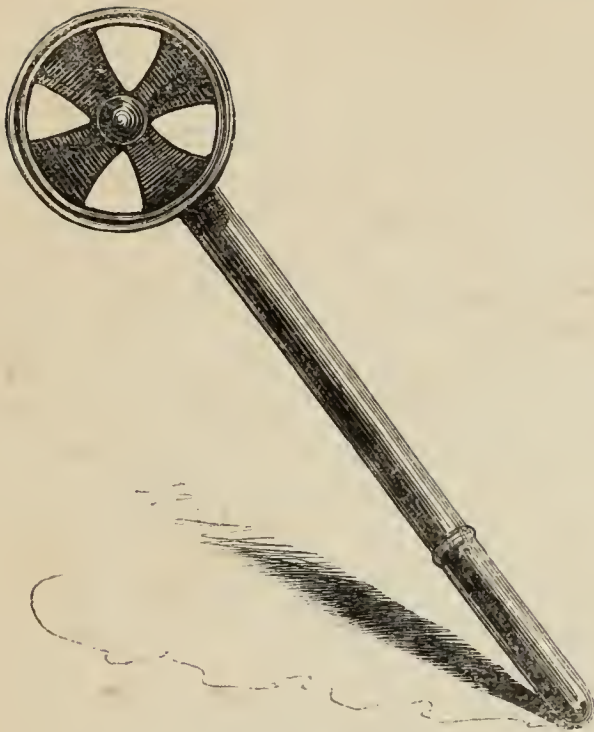
“ I shall do so one of these days,” said Capel.

“ Now, friend Capel, take a mouthful of good advice and thrive:—have the next sculptured, that is, ‘ cut out’ in good stone; affix your own initials and the year of our Lord to it, and then you and your Bear will last in men’s minds for years to come.”

“ A very good thought, and it shall be *done*,” said Capel.

So “ he of the Pencil” called for a sheet of writing-paper, and with pen and ink drew a copy for the stone-mason, and passed it over to the host, who had fits of ecstasy which would have suffocated him, but for the timely presence of the flask.

After this we performed an oratorio of melody, and parted for the evening, sincerely pleased with each other’s society. There were a few faint stars over Cumnor tower, and a streak of lingering day; it was the hour when those who have long gone down into the dust of humanity used to cluster round some invalided abbot or prior in the bay windows of Cumnor Place, listening to his long legends of the Saxon times, of wars, devastations, and miraculous conversions, and that marvellous tradition of the Black Cross



Black Cross of Abingdon.

at St. Helen's in Abingdon, which by the power of the Almighty, who hates perjury, revenged every false oath sworn upon its hilt, with pangs and with visitations, upon kindred and property. This Black Cross of Abingdon was made of iron, and was buried upon the breast-bone of Cissa, uncle to the founder Heane or Heanus, and was found again by the Abbot Athewold in excavating at St. Helen's.*

“Here are several places of interest,” said I (when trudging towards Oxford), “which lie in one track beyond Cunnor, and all of them must be seen; but the distance

will be fatiguing without we can procure a vehicle. To-night we take early rest; to-morrow, should all prosper with us, we will visit Stanton Harcourt, and several villages on the country road,—thence to Godstowe Nunnery.”

“Cheerfully agreed upon,” said my fellow-traveller: and much else that was said was in the joy of a friendly entertainment, where we recounted the pilgrimage of the day.

Early in the morning, whilst a slight drizzling cool rain fell down, and the branches of the pine trees in St. Giles's avenue at Oxford swayed to and fro impatiently with the western wind, we left our dormitory, and in the stillness of the good healthful hour we arranged our travel of the forthcoming day; and by the time that we had glanced hastily over the maps and historical publications referring to the itinerary, in our friend's snug library, the rain ceased, the wind drew within its cloudy home, and sunlight half dazzling, like the bright eyes of childhood shining through the tears of wilfulness, prevailed, with the promise of fortunate change. When the true warmth and the full beam of the summer's morning were assured to us, in the latticed alcove of a delightful flower-garden we breakfasted, with merry children

* You may find mention in Philip de Comines of an Avenging Cross, which a king of France hesitated to swear upon, because vengeance followed the perjurer within a year from the criminal oath-taking,

smiling from the rural seats, which they had drawn near to us; for children know by a single glance where love of childhood is to be found, and it required no conjuror to convict either of us, and *both*, of a desperate inclination to the girls and boys, who are too young to be fond of school, and too active to be without a playmate, even should it be an older, but a frolicsome creature. How many a time has the eloquent beauty of some innocent child's face stood between us and discontent, when the world plagued us, and affliction grew daily more habitual! Often have the eyes of childhood lighted us to regions of hope and joy, and the words of tender lips have been sweeter than all artificial sound to our thirsting soul. When the repast was finished, we promised ourselves and our friends equal pleasures on the succeeding dawn, and hurried to the threshold that we might share adventure, with such a horse and vehicle as old Leland himself would have laughed to see, mounted saddle-bags, and drawn cloak, upon his everlasting Rosinante. It was "Commemoration" time in the city, and there was small choice for strange travellers.

To reach the very notable mansion of Stanton Harcourt, it is necessary, so far as Cumnor, to retrace the path of the preceding day. You leave Oxford travelling westward; you cross the Isis and the bridges over tributary streams to the west of the river, and passing through Cumnor, you drive directly through the village, keeping to the road which diverges to the left. The scenery is retired, rural, and picturesque the whole distance; the winding way, the low green fields, with boundaries garlanded by the delightful flowers of the season. The distant line of upland, the intervening ranks of elm and serpentine rows of rugged pollards, the simple cleanly cottages, the sombre stacks of gorse and fire-wood, the rafted and wattled out-buildings, dabbed and plastered with the warm ochry-looking cement of moistened Oxfordshire clay, and the rude inexpressive sun-burnt faces of the villagers, (denoting an established pedigree, and a diffused and obstinate family similitude,) interested and amused us exceedingly, even whilst we struggled against the lash of a desperate slanting shower of rain, which, with a light marauding gust of wind, stood right to our teeth, and for a while threatened to drive us into shelter. Soon the rain withheld its violence, and we found ourselves in a primitive road, situated between the fall of dull marshy lands, and the ditch, which by twilight it would have been a clever thing to have avoided. There was a latched gate, moreover, at every fifty or a hundred yards, admitting us sometimes to a field more rugged than the one we had left behind, or introducing us to a cross road, proving a very sufficient apology for another pair of gates, with a supplementary moat, perhaps,

to each gate-post, and a portcullis of wild briar, and a dike of stones expressly arranged, it would seem by the "Mathewites," for the certain destruction of drunken waggoners on dark nights. He who travels thus to Stanton Harcourt should preserve a saintly vow of resignation, for it is useless to contend with an opposition, which at most can but heat your system, or rend your garment, or expose your ankle bones by a compound dislocation. I have been with fierce pilgrims, who would have sworn at such things. They were not of *our* amiability. The shower returned with energy—the ruts increased. It was a perpetual ascending and descending upon the steps of the Shandaradan, with creakings and splashings in due accompaniment, all which will be uninteresting, until the reader shall travel upon the same ground upon a rainy day.

"*Not* if you've got the rheumatiz!" was the reply of the old dame at Polesworth to my friend's admiration of the ancient hall: to other friends, who may inquire of the pleasantness and convenience of the Stanton road from Cumnor, we say, "*Not* if you've got the rheumatiz!"

Turning the angle of a wild lane, we came suddenly upon the river Isis, where the water bites into the pebbly shore at Bablick Ferry. We had been instructed to make direct for this ford. There was a residence upon the opposite bank. The broad, square ferry-boat lay deep in the furrowed water. A reverend day labourer—a poor old blear-eyed man, with a scythe upon his shoulder, who was waiting to be hauled over the stream, assisted our conveyance aboard. Just then the shower fell off by scattered arrows of moisture, and the light, with merry twinklings, rejoiced through the spreading osiers. Slowly the rope, shrieking upon the blocks, passed through the brawny hands of the "Charon of Bablick."

"Remind you now of your favourite Dante," said my companion, "and of the grey boatman of Lethe, who croaked aloud to him, and the Mantuan Lyrist, awaiting for the phantom coracle, and mistaking them for wanted cargo;—'*Woe, woe to ye, bad souls! never hope to see the blue sky more! I speed the bark, to lead ye to the eternal shades, where parching flame and piercing ice abound!*'"

"The very remembrance," I replied, "makes this sweet rural passage a world more happy; for who can read without a smarting of the sight, of that 'ferry-man' of '*the livid sulphurous water, whose long white beard, like fine wool, clung to the parched bosom,*' and who '*gazed a'shore with his fiery blood-shotten eyes?*'"

"And what does our old fellow of the scythe remind one of?" said my cheerful friend.

“ He reminds me of an illustration which one might dream to have been supplied in ‘ Gombreville’s Illustrations of Life’ (after Horace); those eloquent ideas, engraved to such good purpose, in an admirable book. It is ‘ Old Time’ accompanying us over the ‘ river of Mortality,’ to bear witness against us on the further shore.”

“ No,” interrupted the Ferryman, “ it be *old Harris*, gentlemen! he comes over again the wood yonder, and more’s the pity he have lost his hearing, poor man!”

We did not controvert the subject, but were landed with Mr. Harris, and tendered *toll*.

“ Come, sir, if you please,— this beänt sixpenz!”

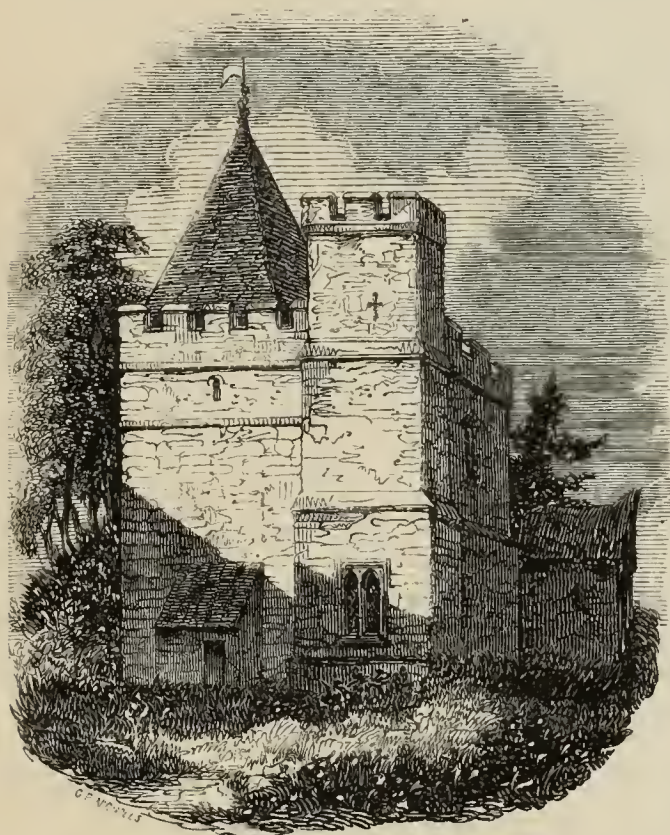
We rectified the error, for we had placed a “ wolf-coin ” from Mr. Roby’s farm in the man’s palm; a token of our river-dream. This teaches how necessary it is (even in a ferry-boat) to confine one’s self to the world one lives in, and not to be talking nonsense before people of little acquaintance with Italian poetry, or with coins of a period antecedent to the reign of King George III.

We were for tearing along the next lane at considerable speed, but the barriers of the field road we had left on the other side of the Isis were renewed. Where at length they ceased to affront our patience, we entered upon a trifling hamlet, for such it appeared to be—a wide desolate pool encroaching upon the highway, to our very horse-track, and then the path again was narrowed, with a large and handsome grange upon the one side, and a few dusky heavy thatched cottages upon the other. We saw a group of fine trees in a picturesque retirement, and gardens adjacent to old sheds, near to which the slender arms of the laburnum threw rain-drops, shaken by the wind, upon the strawy hives and beds of mignonette beneath. Sequestered paddocks, too, there were, over which amazing grass weeds and red-sorrel ran wild, fattening and nodding in plummy clusters, where the brown water nursed the dragon-fly, in the channel between neglected sluices. From an open road over a field you catch the view of Stanton Harcourt, forward and to the right at small distance—the church and tower, and curious kitchen, rising, with many associations, to greet us, from the dense verdure of surrounding trees. The cottage residences near to the mansion are very trim in their arrangements; and the order, in which they add to the effect of the more prominent object in the landscape, is very pleasing to the eye. As it was not our intention to trace the limits of the whole structure in view, but merely to visit “ the Kitchen,” “ Pope’s Tower,” and “ the Church,” we presented ourselves at the private entrance in the centre of a frontage of

building much after the usual manner of the more substantial granges of olden time, and to this is attached, by several antiquated offices, the aforesaid kitchen.

The tenant's lady (Mistress Blake) received us with much courtesy, and, after some preliminary information, she handed us over to the guidance of a comely waiting maid, who carried the keys before us through the quaint passages of the time-honoured dwelling. From a path by the walls and apartments of the tenanted part of the house, taking a short turn from the *modern* kitchen, if such comparison be allowable, you enter the more celebrated dome. It has been conjectured that this was built, with the mansion as it was originally occupied, so early as in the reign of Edward IV. At the very first sight it reminds you of the Abbot's Kitchen at Glastonbury,

erected in the early part of the reign of King Henry VIII. But the plan of the two architects is different. The latter is a square enclosing an octagon, and this, both inside and without, is square, only the upper part, or cover, is octagonal. The Glastonbury pile is of lesser dimensions, and has a chimney. Any one who can refer to the section of it in Doctor Stukely's Itinerary, comparing it with this, will readily perceive the distinctions. The interior, to the central point of the roof, is sixty-four feet in height, and is as sooty and as dim as one can well conceive. Opposite to the entrance are three wide and



Stanton Kitchen, exterior.

lofty recesses in the wall, which is a yard thick, and in these recesses are the capacious ovens, the steam of which has been delicious to the sturdy fellows who formerly clothed themselves in leather and iron, and did good credit to the Harcourt hospitalities. A wood fire was burning between two rude piles of brickwork, and a three-legged pot, of degenerated size, swung over the blinding smoke from a rod laid transversely above. So far as we could scan the space aloft, we saw on either side in opposite directions to the oven



Stanton Kitchen, interior.

and wood-fire, two square windows, each containing a low trefoiled arch or opening, and upon one side these were blocked up with spars and other materials. It is rarely now used by the family for culinary purposes, so far as roasting and boiling are concerned, the loose gathering of soot aloft would be so apt to flavour the rumps and sirloins and lusty turkeys. You reach the passage around the battlement by a spiral staircase in a square tower at one angle of the building. This is lighted by several loop-holes in such an illiberal mode, that if you lacerated your shins or flattened your nose by a very likely fall, you could not be much alarmed

at the sight of your own blood till you had limped up to the landing-place. This tower rises nine feet above the other walls. The roof we have mentioned is octagonal, and under the eaves are shutters, which, being closed or removed, rule the exit of the volume of smoke within, as the wind may shift from one quarter to another. A stunted polygonal pillar, with a swelling capital surmounts the roof, and upon this is seated a very consequential griffin, eight feet in stature, feathered and winged and beaked, like a faithful heraldic monster, and holding erect in the right claw or paw, a flag-shaped vane of metal, decorated at the free corners with bold fleurs-de-lis. It was said to have been, once, an ungodly master cook, who wept with hardheartedness when a great "dole" was given to the poor, at the obsequies of one of the very *very* old family, many *many* years ago, before chaff beds were invented for noblemen, and "poor laws" for humble people; and he went out of his mind at last, but not *into* a better mind, but *into* the form of a griffin, which, as every natural historian can

tell you, will stand by its property or any body else's, and never lose, for Nostradamus himself, one atom, or even the smell of it. So ever since he has been sitting upon the old kitchen to be regaled with the shrieking of the weathercock and the smoke from the vault beneath, and to see poor white-haired old men, and their tear-wasted young widows, and heaven-protected younglings, walking away from the Hall with daily lots of fragmentary nourishment. The public will be maliciously delighted to hear that, owing to the charitable disposition of Mrs. Blake, the agonies of the petrified criminal are likely to be perpetuated. We descended in perfect security, but had some difficulty to clear our curious way upon returning to the ground floor. Here, was a pump-handle at an angle of 45, like the clumsiest arm of a juvenile orator — there, were a stone cistern, carpenter's benches, superannuated scullery tables, and old timber, old iron, and a lumber store of such like impediments.

The rosy maiden with the keys directed us across the garden to the Chapel and its tower. "The principal parts of the mansion," says an authority, "the great Hall, the great and little parlour, the Queen's Chamber, (so named from its having been occupied by Elizabeth queen of Bohemia, when she made a visit there,) with other chambers, filled the space between the domestic chapel and the kitchen, and remained entire until near the end of the last century." Some upper rooms in the small remaining part of the house, adjoining the kitchen and occupied, are nearly in the original state, and bear evident marks of their antiquity. The chapel has one chamber over a part of it, and a tower, and this tall square tower is fifty-four feet six inches high, the turret that supports the steps being nearly a yard higher. The division of the chapel under the tower where the block of stone termed the "altar" now stands, is twelve feet square, and fifteen feet ten inches high in the centre. Below the springing of the arch, on one side, are the arms of Harcourt emblazoned on a shield; on the other, those of Byron; and this part is vaulted with fan-tracery, and a moulded circular ornament in the centre. The ribs spring from corbels in the angles, two of which are demi-celestials, bearing escutcheons, with a cross arising upon the fillet which binds the forehead around. Of the other two, one is the head of an ancient man, and this is mutilated; the other is a female head, clothed: each head is surmounted by a floral border, in very good taste. There is a good perpendicular arch between this part of the chapel, which is under the tower, and the other portion, which may have been devoted to domestics and rural visitants. There is a square head over this arch, and some vivid coloured flourishings, &c., are still perceptible. The western

partition of the sacred space has a flat wooden ceiling formed into compartments with parti-coloured mouldings. The ground is the old favourite blue, to represent the heavens, with golden or gilded stars in the middle of the squares. This tower is supposed to have been raised by Sir Robert Harcourt in the reign of Edward IV. He was one of the Knights of the Garter in that reign. The chapel is now desecrated, the very pews are there, in memory of the pious souls who once breathed their thanksgiving and penitence at the nobler altar. Well may the proud house of the Harcourts fail, and the name be swamped in modern peerage, when a horse-block is in the sanctuary of their forefathers, and fisherman's nets are spread to dry in the vacant oratory. We speak without fear, for we pause not for the apathy of leaden consciences. The room which is known by a fair tradition as the study of Alexander Pope (*"Mister Pope"* as we heard



Pope's Chamber.

him designated by a garrulous lecturer of Brummagem) is in the third story of this tower. It was one of the three chambers therein, one above the other, each measuring about 12 or 13 feet square. It has recently

been panelled with oak, and it is well lighted, with a small low fire-place in one corner for the wintrier season. If ever man were influenced by surrounding agencies it was Pope. He was like one of those household pets which cannot sleep, or move, or stand without all things near are modelled and motioned to their finest inclination. We can perfectly appreciate the facility which, in this secluded height, with all beautiful excitements so near to him, he enjoyed for study and the composition of his immortal writings. Certainly here, betimes, he was weaned by the delicate whisperings of holy nature, from those irritable thoughts and revengeful ink-battles which sullied his better soul. Here, he was the man who lured the "Nymphs of Solyma" to the celestial song, and poured the balm of charity into the suicidal heart-wounds of his bewildered friend Savage, and not, as in the van of emulous compeers, the sickly buckram'd gladiator with net and lance, seeking to ensnare and wound the flying enemy. Yes! we remained in "Pope's study" with remembrance of the calumny which had been gathered to his history, and with acknowledgment of the debilities of his self-control. The pane of red stained glass, inscribed "*In the year 1718 Alexander Pope finished here the fifth volume of Homer,*" has been taken out of this chamber and preserved at Nuneham, the present seat of the Harcourts, as an invaluable relique. The hand of Pope was capable of performing beautifully in MS., however specimens may appear to show the contrary, and we know that the diamond was more than once used to express his wit and sentiment. He once, with the stone of a ring, wrote these extemporaneous lines upon the glass of the window of an inn, in compliment to the literary abilities of Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield: —

"Accept a miracle instead of wit,
See two dull lines by Stanhope's pencil writ!"

Can you not fancy the attenuated little bard, seated near to that window, with his cheek leaning upon his slender hand, as it was his custom for a weary time, and indeed for the whole hour long, to do?

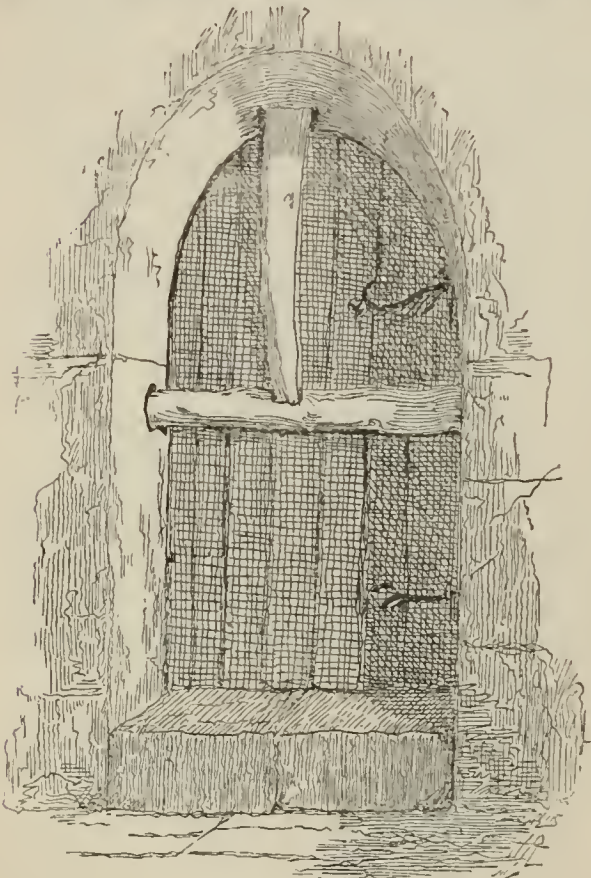
Perhaps he had received the last supply of learned notes to "Homer" from the erudite young Jortin, afterwards famous in his own career. Perhaps the correspondence of his helpmates Broom or Fenton? No! their need was over for a while: the fifth volume was accomplished. He wished just *then* that St. Patrick's Dean would write, or that cheerful Gay would leave the bottle with Harcourt at Cockthorp, and come to gossip with him from so trifling a distance. All the blurred MSS. were around, but the measure was completed, full to the brim. He knows the labour of the two

summers is over: but he cannot believe himself, and with fevered hand, trembling with excitement, he scratches the truth that he may read it there, upon the stained glass at Stanton Harcourt: and *this* the wise world dotes upon; and *this* closeted space it guards with veneration, because fighting men have built castles, and affluent princes have made bowers and palaces; but for every Alexander Pope there must be millions of unremembered cut-throats, and for generations of titled nothings but very few who can say wise things well, and with heaven's own inspiration. Oh! blue-eyed Martha Blount! Had you played those cards of yours, instead of sorting them so frequently, you might have won a pool of immortality. Sorely am I persuaded, that any good Catholic might have eaten your fair flesh upon a Friday, without risk of having fallen upon a warm-blooded-animal! Twenty-nine portraits of the laurelled "draper's son" are registered in correct "Mr. Granger," all by eminent artists! and *you!*—never died for the original, but lived on, and exercised your confounded constitutional insensibilities!

The tower and kitchen, with the walls between them, form one side of the garden squares; the tenanted front, shaded by splendid trees, is another side: the other two are formed by walls and ruined out-building. The garden is an excellent one, filled with choice shrubs and flowers, and preserved in the very best order. A pretty rose tree climbed the wall by the entrance door to the domestic chapel of former times, and we imagined and spoke together of the luxury which these perfumed leaves and stems, plentiful with green life, might have bestowed upon the tired senses of the weary poet returning from the Greek and Latin of his ærial studio, to the flourishing parterre, and the balmy breezes of the commodious garden. A door in the garden-wall at the rear of the quadrangle leads you into the churchyard; hence you see to the left a considerable range of building on the outer boundary, viz. the porter's lodge of the old manor-house, the face of which towards the road remains in its original unaltered form. It was erected by Sir Simon Harcourt in 1547. The arms—Harcourt impaling Darrell—are on both fronts on either side of the gateway. The walls of the church are of rubble, quoined with smoothed stone. The plan is cruciform. The blended architecture is of the 12th, 13th, and 15th centuries, at which latter date the Harcourt chapel or aisle was attached to the south side of the chancel. There is a fine triple lancet window at the east end of the chancel, and on the north side six lancet windows in two elegant triplets, though one of the lights is obscured by an obtrusive monument. There is a small round-headed early English door on this side, now blocked up. On the south side one of

the triplets also remains perfect, the other was destroyed, when the chapel was erected, to give way for two perpendicular arches opening into it. These are now plastered up. Under the window on the south side of the altar is a very elegant early English piscina, with a stone shelf, and a shaft from the ground to carry the basin. The "rood screen" remains perfect, of original oak-work, and is of the same age as the chancel arch, which is of the early English style. The mouldings of the wood-work correspond with those of the stone-work exactly. The original lock is worthy of attention. On the north side of the altar is a very handsome monument, about four feet long. (It is faithfully engraved in the large plates to Skelton's Oxfordshire Antiquities.) It is only two feet in breadth. It has a high decorated canopy over it, supported in the centre by a slender pillar between two elegant floral arches, which are richly buttressed and pinnacled upon either side. On the cornice are escutcheons of arms of the nobility. On the small altar-tomb itself are five escutcheons, now blank, though formerly, perhaps, emblazoned and gilded. Three of these are borne by remarkable figures in scaled or imbricated attire: they have small crosses upon their heads, and the hair is after the fashion adopted in the time of Edward I. The emblems of the Crucifixion—the hands and feet, and the pierced heart of Jesus—are sculptured above the small ornamental arches, in which these figures and shields are placed. The sexton who accompanied us (or the clerk it might have been) was a small, wheezy, piping, garrulous old attenuation of humanity, and he assured us—"all this was exactly copied from Christ's sepulchre, in the town of Jerusalem." The wiseacre had heard some of the clerical people or the antiquarian folk speaking, may be, of the former use of this altar-tomb, as expressed in the Gentleman's Magazine in 1841, and he had swallowed a contortion which bore no resemblance to the truth. In the Catholic Church, *now* as in former times, the Friday of Holy Week, which precedes Easter Day, is preserved as a solemn fast and day of supplication and meditation. The altar and temple are shrouded with purple or sable coverings. The mementos of Christ's suffering are also shrouded, and all kinds of ornaments are placed as much as possible out of sight of the congregation. This is intended to express the mourning of the church for the ignominious death of the Redeemer of mankind. The host, or sacred bread, is not consecrated as usual upon that day, but the priest receives the bread consecrated upon the Maundy Thursday, upon which day, with solemn procession, the host is taken to some adjoining chapel or apartment, decorated magnificently, and lighted with lamps and wax-lights, where beneath a canopy it remains, the clergy and the devout watching thereby for the whole day

and night, in contemplation of the mystery of the cross; and by turns most of the congregations visit such chapel or oratory, and spend a while in silence, prostration, and mental prayer. Now in old times this "sepulchre," as it is called, was maintained upon a separate altar within the church, as of the "lady chapel," or the chapel of the presiding saint or angel, and sometimes as an honour to some benefactor, whose family were interred beneath the holy roof. It was kept at that particular tomb, which was arrayed for the solemn occasion. This tomb at Harcourt is said to have been the "Good-Friday Sepulchre" in Catholic times; whose tomb it was none can tell you now! The good and the evil, clinging to the bones remaining in that beautiful depository, are remembered only in heaven. Wood describes this monument as that of Isabel, daughter of Richard de Camville, a family extensively connected with the Harcourts, Lovells, Marmions, Bohuns, &c. Very near to this, but westward, is the monument with an admirable effigy, with the distinct costume of the period of Lady Maud Grey of the Greys of Rotherfield, who assumed the name and arms of Marmion, in her mother's right. She was the wife of Sir Thomas de Harcourt, and died in the 17th year of Richard II. The head-dress, mantle and cape, and surcoat, are in



Door, Stanton Harcourt Church.

excellent preservation, and the details are tolerably perfect. There are other altar tombs and brasses in the church, very interesting, and to be found correctly described in the usual local authorities. The font is good, perpendicular in style, octagon, panelled, with buttresses at the angles; the emblems of the Crucifixion on one of the panels, I. H. C. in Gothic character upon another, and the arms of Byron on another. It was carefully restored in 1833; but the original painted ornaments may be seen upon a tablet under the western window. South of the font is a massive oaken door, closed, and formerly guarded by a singular vertical beam and inferior cross-bar, which traversed

into holes within the solid masonry. By the side of the north door, which is opposite to this, is a plain Norman stoup. This door was used by the women only. The roof of the nave is good open timber-work of the latter part of the 14th century: the parapet is plain, of the same age as the roof.

We directed our chattering guide to show us to the "Harcourt Chapel." The Harcourt aisle is of rich Perpendicular work, with an open quatrefoil parapet, and square-topped pinnacles; it was erected in the time of Henry VII., and it is filled with monuments of the family from that period until the present time. Under the east window, where formerly the altar stood, is a monument of marble and alabaster, gilded, to the memory of Sir Philip Harcourt, who died 1688. Columns, drapery, and cherubim as usual. Under the cornice, situated in oval niches, are excellent busts of Sir Philip and his wife Anne, daughter of Sir William Walter, the famous parliamentary general. The monument on the south side is that of Sir Robert Harcourt, who was slain by the Staffords of the Lancastrian party, in 1471. The figure is armed; the order of the Garter upon the left leg; over all the mantle of the order with cape and cordon; his uncovered head rests upon a helmet, crested with a peacock; at his feet is a lion. His lady, Margaret, daughter of Sir John Byron, lies to the right upon the same tomb: she is in the veiled head-dress falling back; has also a mantle surcoat and cordon, with long sleeves fastened in a singular manner at the wrists. The figure of the lady is curious, from her being represented with "*the Garter*," which, with the motto in embossed letters, emblazoned, is fastened above the elbow of the left arm. She is one of the three known examples of female sepulchral effigies having been decorated with the insignia of that order. Opposite to the monument of this Sir Robert and his lady, is that of Sir Robert, his grandson, who was standard-bearer to king Henry VII. at the battle of Bosworth Field. He might have accepted such a post of honour after the fall of Sir William Brandon, who was cut down by King Richard's own fierce hand, when he made that desperate charge upon the Earl of Richmond's body-guard, which recoiled in his own confusion and death. "The red dragon of Cadwallader" is distinctly stated to have been hurled down in this struggle, and, perhaps, Master Robert Harcourt had the more secure employment of waving it before the new king at Crown Hill, soon after the crush of the retreat was over! Perhaps he was the bearer of a family distinction, or of that banner of the day, the "*yellow tarterne*," on which was painted "*a dun-cow*." On the front of this tomb are four monks in dark vesture holding their beads, and two angels holding each a shield. At the head is a red rose—the well-known cognisance of the House of Lancaster. He is sculptured with the hair of the

head all free; he has plate armour with a mail gorget, a collar of S. S., and a large hilted sword. Crest, a helmet with peacock upon a ducal coronet, upon which he reclines his head. Underneath, the figures of two men engraved upon brass upon the pavement, are inscribed the names of Thomas Harcourt, who died 1460, and Nicholas Atherton, 1454, son by the first husband of Margaret, wife of Sir Robert Harcourt, whose dame was a "lady of the Garter." There are also other figures in brass descriptively named. There is a mural monument of marble, ornamented with flowers, to the memory of Simon, the son of Simon Harcourt, with an inscription in Latin, by Dr. Friend, and the following by his friend the poet, Alexander Pope:—

"To this sad shrine, whoe'er thou art, draw near!
 Here lies the friend most loved, the son most dear;
 Who ne'er knew joy, but friendship might divide,
 Or gave his father grief, but when he died.
 How vain is reason! Eloquence, how weak!
 If Pope must tell, what Harcourt cannot speak;
 Oh! let thy once-loved friend inscribe thy stone,
 And with a father's sorrows mix his own."

"This epitaph," says Dr. Johnson, "is principally remarkable for the artful introduction of the name, which is inserted with a peculiar felicity, to which chance must occur, with genius: which no man can hope to attain twice, and which cannot be copied but with servile imitation." The father of this man (we suppose), the coronetted figure recumbent near, is so bedaubed with oil colour, &c., scarlet, yellow, and blue, that we turned from it (with all due respect to the deceased) as a paltry concern, more worthy of the caravans of Dickens's transcendent "Mrs. Jarley," than of a place in a solemn house of interment for the husks of mundane nobility. For correct ideas of these monuments it would be well to refer to Gough's splendid work on the "*Funeral monuments of Great Britain.*" There are two epitaphs in this church, written by Pope—the one just quoted, and that upon the "*Lovers' Tomb:*" within the church is a third, by Congreve, on Robert Huntingdon, whose family residence was the large square-moated house, as you leave the village for Ensham. As the clerk locked the door, much disgusted with some remarks which we had ventured upon the "tailor's and brazier's work" called *surcoats* and *helmets*, and "*lords' crowns,*" which, disguised with dust and theatrical foil, hang within the walls of the "*Harcourt Chapel,*" we soothed his irritabilities by requesting him to show us the inscription written by "Mister Pope" upon the stone of the young people who were killed by the thunderbolt!" He brightened up, and pointed to the tablet upon the south wall of the church:—

“ Near this place lie the bodies of
 John Hewet and Sarah Drew,
 An industrious young man
 And virtuous maiden of this parish ;
 Who being at harvest work
 (With several others)
 Were in one instant killed by lightning,
 The last day of July 1718.”

“ Think not by rig'rous judgment seiz'd,
 A pair so faithful could expire ;
 Victims so pure, heaven saw well pleas'd,
 And snatch'd them in celestial fire.

“ Live well, and fear no sudden fate ;
 When God calls virtue to the grave,
 Alike 'tis justice soon or late,
 Mercy alike to kill or save.
 Virtue unmov'd can hear the call,
 And face the flash that melts the ball.”

Hear Mr. Gay's letter to a Mr. F—— from Stanton Harcourt, August 9. 1718, about a week after the catastrophe : —

“ John Hewet was a well-set man, of about five-and-twenty. Sarah Drew might be rather called comely than beautiful, and was about the same age. They had passed thus the various labours of the year together, with the greatest satisfaction ; if she milked, it was his morning and evening care to bring the cows to her hand : it was but last *fair* that he bought her a present of green silk for her straw hat ; and the posie on her silver ring was of his choosing. Their love was the talk of the whole neighbourhood ; for scandal never affirmed that they had any other views than the lawful possession of each other in marriage. It was that very morning that he had obtained the consent of her parents ; and it was but till the next week that they were to wait to be happy. Perhaps in the intervals of their work they were now talking of their wedding clothes : and John was suiting her several sorts of poppies and field flowers to her complexion, to choose her a knot for the wedding day. Whilst they were thus busied (it was on the last of July, between two and three in the afternoon), the clouds grew black, and such a storm of thunder and lightning ensued, that all the labourers made the best of their way to that shelter the trees and hedges afforded. Sarah was frightened, and fell down in a swoon on a heap of barley. John, who never separated from her, sat down by her side, having raked together two or three heaps, the better to secure her from the storm. Immediately there was heard so loud a crack as if heaven had split asunder : every one now was solicitous for the safety of his neighbour, and called to one another, through-

out the field: no answer being returned to those who called to our lovers, they stept to the place where they lay; they perceived the barley all in a smoke, and then spied this faithful pair: John, with one arm about Sarah's neck, and the other held over her, as to skreen her from the lightning. They were struck dead, and stiffened in this tender posture. Sarah's left eyebrow was singed, and there appeared a black spot on her breast; her lover was all over black, but not the least signs of life were found in either. Attended by their melancholy companions, they were conveyed to the town, and next day were interred in Stanton Harcourt churchyard."

This needs no comment from unworthy lips; it is the epitome of gentle feeling. The clerk was much surprised to learn that we knew about these young people, and "Mr. Gay's letter." He had deemed himself to be the residuary legatee of this literary trust. In the churchyard there is the socket of the pillar of an ancient stone cross, cast beneath the shade of a venerable tree. The gravestones on this side of the cemetery, and the square tombs, are all jerked about as if there had been an earthquake, or as if they had belonged to the ghosts of separate clans, who, in hastening to avoid hateful companionship, had lurched over their dismal habitations. The most interesting view of the church and churchyard, &c. is from the other side of the pool at the eastern boundary. We returned, full of mixed thoughts and quaint remembrances, to Mrs. Blake's small entrance parlour. Pope made pretence, in one of his letters to the Duke of Buckingham, of giving a full description of his residence of Stanton Harcourt:—

"I have been reading," says he, "the description of Pliny's house, with an eye to yours; but finding they will bear no comparison, will try if it can be matched, by the large country seat I inhabit at present, and see what figure it may make by the help of a *florid description*. You must expect nothing regular in my description any more than in the house; the whole vast edifice is so disjointed, and the several parts of it so detached from one another, and yet so joining again, one cannot tell how, that, in one of my poetical fits, I imagined it had been a village at Amphion's time, where the cottages, having taken a country dance together, had all been 'out,' and stood stone-still with amazement ever since." (We omit the parlour opening with the "dusty pigeon-house," and the "chapel smoking with the steam of the kitchen.") He continues:—"The great hall within is high and spacious, flanked on one side with a very long table, a true image of ancient hospitality; the walls are all over ornamented with monstrous horns of animals, about twenty broken pikes, ten or a dozen blunderbusses, and a rusty match-lock musket or two, which we were informed had served in the 'civil wars.' Here is one vast

arched window, beautifully darkened with divers escutcheons of painted glass; one shining pane in particular bears date 1286, which alone preserves the memory of a knight, whose iron armour is long since perished with the rust, and whose alabaster nose is mouldered from his monument." . . . "In former days there have dined in this very hall gartered knights and courtly dames, attended by ushers, sewers, and seneschals, and yet it was but last night an owl flew hither, and mistook it for a barn." (He then describes the "ups and downs" of the hall and the contents of the "great parlour," viz. "the broken-bellied virginal, the crippled velvet chairs, the mildewed portraits, and the dried poppies and mustard seed." Then we read of "the pigeon-house, and the entry by the side of it, leading you to the two chambers; the buttery, the chaplain's study, the brewhouse, the little green and gilt parlour, the great stairs, the dairy, the servants' hall, and the old dame's devotional closet," where she could mumble her "lesson," and watch the frolicsome maids at one and the same time.) "There are upon the ground floor," writes the author, "in all, twenty-six apartments, among which I must not forget a chamber which has in it a large quantity of timber, that seems to have been either a bedstead or a cyder press." The kitchen is built in the form of a rotunda, being one vast vault to the top of the house; where one aperture serves to let out the smoke and let in the light. By the blackness of the walls, the circular fires, vast caldrons, yawning mouths of ovens and furnaces, you would think it either the Forge of Vulean, the Cave of Polypheme, or the Temple of Moloch. The horror of this place has made such an impression on the country people, that they believe the witches keep their Sabbath here, and that once a year the devil treats them with infernal venison, viz. a toasted tiger stuffed with tenpenny nails." (He next describes the rooms above stairs with the spiders' webs, flawed ceilings, broken windows, and rusty locks; where also, as he writes, "the doors are as little and as low as those to the cabins of packet boats." The very rats of the house, he says, are "grey," and he prays the roof may not fall upon them, for they are too infirm to seek other lodgings.) Thus he concludes:—"We had never seen half what I have described, but for a starched grey-headed steward, who is as much an antiquity as any in this place, and looks like an old family picture, walked out of its frame. He entertained us as we passed from room to room, with several relations of the family: but his observations were particularly curious when he came to the cellar: he informed us *where* stood the triple row of butts of sack, and *where* were ranged the bottles of Tent for toasts in a morning: he pointed to the stands that supported the iron-hooped hogs-heads of strong beer: then stepping to a corner, he hugged out the tattered

fragments of an unframed picture. ‘This (says he with tears) was *Poor!* Sir Thomas!! once master of *all* this drink! He had two sons, poor young masters! who never arrived to the age of his beer; they both fell ill in this very room, and never went out on their own legs!’” . . . “He then led us up the Tower by dark winding steps, which landed us into several little rooms one above another. One of these was nailed up; and our guide whispered to us, as a secret, the occasion of it . . . The ghost of Lady Frances is supposed to walk there; and some prying maids of the family report that they have seen a lady in a fardingale, through the key-hole: but the matter is hushed up, and the servants are forbid to talk of it.” And again, at the very close of the epistle, “we owe to this old house the same kind of gratitude that we do to an old friend who harbours us in his declining condition; nay, even in his last extremities. How fit is this retreat for uninterrupted study! where no one that passes by can dream there is an inhabitant, and even those who would dine with us dare not stay under our roof; any one that sees it will own I could not have chosen a more likely place to converse with the dead in.” The very plan of the dwelling betrays the exaggerations and the fiction of this imaginative writer. All is different to that which he has seemed to describe. It looks to me a strange contrivance that Sir Thomas’s two sons should *die in a cellar!* and the “*Adultery Chamber*” was never heard of before or *since* the time he scribbled his lively effusion. We inquired of the old fellow in the smock frock, who guarded our vehicle, if Stanton “could afford a ghost?” and he said “they couldn’t maintain the livin’ uns, let alone a sperrit!” However, he was a discontented, jolly-faced rustic, and much after the manner of a middle-man, or “Butty,” we once travelled with inside a coach in the mining district, between Brummagem and Dudley. A lady passenger attributed much of the prevailing distress to luxurious habits, and a general neglect of domestic economy in the working classes, and she instanced a family who had *hares* for supper *twice* a week in the season!

“Ah, ma’am!” said he, muttering between his purpled lips and puffing with sensual torpidity; “Him as can’t do now-a-days in this here ‘short times,’ wi’ a plain bit o’ duck or goose and a thimble full o’ summat to keep it down, ought’s to goo wi’ out vittle at all.”

Thus with our friend at Harcourt: he, and all his brethren we fell in with, seemed in good hue and strength; and called starvation, maybe, a different thing to that which it is *known to be* by those worse off in the world. The manner in which the present buildings are kept up at Stanton Harcourt is a credit to the worthy proprietor: we could wish to have seen some amend-

ments in the church, and a preservation of the respectability of the little chapel, but the agents often suppress the good ideas of their master, and graft their own absurdities and negligences upon his better judgment and active desires. It is a delightful place for the inspection of the literary traveller, and we have to regret that we met with no wiser ones there than ourselves, from whom we could have gathered more interesting particulars. Of the pedigree, &c. of the Harcourt family we annex the following:—

“Gules, two bars or, is borne by the Marshal de Harcourt, duke and peer of France. From which illustrious house descended the most noble, potent, and honourable Simon Harcourt, Viscount and Baron Harcourt, of Stanton Harcourt, in the county of Oxford. In the Conqueror’s expedition to England, Gervase, Count de Harcourt, and his two sons, attended him: and from Jeffery, the eldest, who returned with his father into Normandy, the Marshal above mentioned is descended in the right line, and from Arnold, the youngest, our present Lord Harcourt. This Arnold had a son named Robert, who married Isabella, daughter to Richard de Camville, with whom he had the manor of Stanton Harcourt, which has continued in this family ever since. In this noble house the order of knighthood has been almost hereditary, there being but two instances, for almost three hundred years past, wherein the chiefs of this family have not enjoyed it: and Robert de Harcourt was Knight of the Garter in the time of Edward IV. Sir Simon Harcourt was killed, at the siege of Carrick-main, in the kingdom of Ireland, fighting against the people there for King Charles I., and he left issue; Sir Philip, father of Simon, Lord Viscount Harcourt. This lord, by his first wife, had three sons (of which Simon, the eldest, and the last surviving, died at Paris, 1720,) and two daughters, Anne and Arabella: by Elizabeth, his second wife, he had not issue. The crest is *on a ducal coronet, a Peacock proper*. Supporters, *two Lions topaz, on their necks two Barrs ruby*. Colonel Charles Essex, who, with his father (created a baronet 10th James I.), was slain at Edge Hill, had for his mother, Jane, eldest daughter of Sir Walter Harcourt, of Stanton Harcourt. The baronetcy then became extinct.

Returning thanks to the polite hostess at the farm for her attentions, we turned our steed to the village, and inquired of the first juvenile upon the road the whereabouts of the stones in the vicinity, usually called the “*Devil’s Quoits*.”

“It’s over the field,” said the smock-frocked urchin, pointing westward, in the direction of the stream. At our bidding, and with the understanding of a compensation, he wagged his pair of cumbrous heels by the side of our

vehicle, and became our guide. The first rude stone lies in a field to the right hand of the field road, and is of no great size. The second is in another in a "land" farther on. The third, and the tallest, beyond that, in another ground.

"Them be the devil's kites!" said the guide; "a many year ago they carried a bigger than all on 'em away, to make a bridge somewhere." We alighted, and deliberately inspected them. They are of the sandstone common to the country, veined with a deeper shade.

"Mr. Thomas Warton, in his account of Kiddington," said my friend, "conjectures that these monumental stones, formerly of considerable number, and a barrow since destroyed by the curious labours of some Oxford people, were dragged here and erected, in some degree of order, to commemorate an engagement fought in the year 614, between the British and Saxons, at Bampton, when the Saxon Princes, Cynegil and Cwichelon, slew upwards of ten thousand of the British army."

"Yes," replied I, "but we shall confute them from the mere contents of our foraging bag, with the Legend of the "*Red Sun Setting*," older than the days of Thomas à Becket, and which affords a different version of the coming of those wonderful stones! Hallooing to the boy to keep strict guard in the ruts, and vaulting at once to the summit of the smaller stone, with the preface of a pilgrim's crust, the one read to the other some loose leaves from the aforementioned depository.

The Legend.

King Stephen of England secretly admired and openly praised the beauty and accomplishments of Milicent, the fair spouse of Richard de Camvil. She had received the grant of her manor of Stanton from her kinswoman, Queen Adeliza, the second wife to King Henry I., and Stephen confirmed the grant to her and to her heirs, the crown acknowledging the maintenance by a singular manner of service. In this reign there was not a chapel upon her ground, because the venerable Saxon building had been unroofed and torn down by a dreadful hurricane, and the aged Norman clerk who had officiated retired to a temporary shelter by the forest-side, to spend a holy retreat in prayer and fasting, and spiritual readings, until masons and other artificers had answered to the proclamation for the revival of this hallowed foundation of the saints of other days. In June of a certain year, and soon after St. Barnaby's Feast, whilst the girls still wore their garlands of *wild rose* and *wood ruffe*, and the hearths remained strewed with *fingered-fern*,

there was a strange *red sunset*, which young people then living talked of, to their grandchildren, and to passengers by the way, when they were old and childish again. Infants were asleep upon their mothers' breasts—younglings lay smiling in dreams upon fleeces of the shorn lamb—the labour of the day was over—the curfew tolled dismally to Saxon ears—when all at once the dark clouds, illuminated by fringed margins of golden light, spread every where aloft like a creeping, trembling scud, or like the films which suddenly appear upon the molten lead, when it meets cool air, at the shrine-maker's threshold; and the great people at the court, and the poor men of the village, all turned them towards the portentous western sky, where the setting sun, broad and round, red as blood new spilt, and penned within a cage of purpled bars, seemed ready to burst with concealed fire, and threw up as it were a fume, rendered faintly visible, of rose-colour and crimson, and streaky yellow, into the far and nearer sky. The trees were red, and the waters were red. The figured saints which stand in the gush of the ruby pane of the rare casement of the monastic choir were not so tinted with the same as were the silent men and the wimpled dames, who stood petrified and dazzled exceedingly in that prevailing lustre. The warden of the near turret looked, upon his beetling height, like the brazen guardian of a place of fiends. Where the willows twinkled upon a space of less sultry hue over the moor—by the swamp of the “Windrush”—every one could see the old priest folded in his sable vestment, lessening with the retiring paces; for he trod a knoll descending to the river, and upon that knoll you could almost distinguish the tares and thistles battling with the gentle water breeze. Night came down very speedily, and when daylight was extinguished, men reminded them of evil deeds which had spurned the rebuke of conscience, and rude feasting knaves slunk from the kitchen-board—and some tender, melancholy people shed tears, and knew not why! That evening was like an illustrated page of some magical history, radiating with its vivid words and horrid lineaments an invincible superstition; it was like Heaven's wrath in old times, renewed for some dire and impending calamity. Men in those simple ages thought deeper than worldlings now. We cannot justly conceive their awe: let us leave them sleeping—dreaming—weeping, and follow the priest to his penitent's chamber. There is a weedy wharf by the River Windrush, and tiles and rafters, and huge stakes, bestrew the terraced ground, as if some former hall had flourished there, in the midst of the umbrageous trees and intertwisted osiers. There is a little hut, and only one low room in it. The hut is built of osiers wattled, and the roof is pointed like the peak of a bondsman's head-gear. The roof is covered with ravellings of bark from osier trees. The

doorway is of rude boughs matted together with bands of rushes and dried water-flags from the brook. In the centre of the house is a weak and doubtful flame from burning knots of decayed trees, and the smoke wends through the chilling aperture aloft, first swaying from one side of the hovel to the other, like a blind thing feeling for its way.

“Dominus sit in corde tuo!” said the priest, giving his blessing to the wasted form of a once athletic creature, who groaned upon dried weeds in the dismal chamber: “Child, child, I know thy life of sin and misery! Be reconciled, my son, to Heaven. Lo! this is the third time—perhaps the *last*—and I have visited thee from pure mercy, to peril of my own safety! Oh, make use of this hour—it *may be* thy last! Did Bertram and Huet know thou wert resting here, not all the spectres that have wandered here since thou slew the household of thine enemy could keep them, with their fanged hounds, from this *haunted* wilderness. Oh, thou outlaw and excommunicate! hold up thine hands—be reconciled, and die in peace; if so God wills to thee, poor sinner.”

“What time is it?—what hour? speak!” said the indistinct form hastily, and with earnest supplication.

“Near to the midnight,” was the answer.

“I am in agony!—pain!—pain! and I would *not* die!” moaned the suppliant; “listen!—lay thy stole upon my breast for safety—hold thine hand in mine—*firmly—there!*” Now (the voice became like that of a loud wretch bereft of reserve and shame) “I have been *out* to night—*out* upon the moor—ay, *out* upon the moor; you remember how strong I *was*—I was juggler and gleeman, and I fought for gold with fist and staff. I was so strong, so devilish mighty *then!* I killed a knave or two (I think it was *two* of them I chanced to slay)—look—*thus*, with my *naked hand!* Stop! I killed *another* and *all* his babes—*one, two, three, four*;—and the blind old nurse—I beat *her* with a stone; she was so old, and she would *not* die.”

“My child, my son, rave not thus wildly!—thou wert peaceful and good but yester-eve, and your tears were sweetness to feel upon my bosom.”

“Hush!—your vest has fallen from my bosom,” interrupted the sufferer, “I am safe when it is there. Father, do you know who I am?—look through the dim night and tell me speedily. Don’t whisper!—I am safe—safe, whilst your hand is close in mine, and your stole upon my bosom! I could almost sing—I will sing you the ‘*Boat-call of the North-man.*’”

“Oh, madness (said the priest): be hushed, and listen to the prayer of your comforter:—‘Lord, have mercy on this wretched soul! Heaven have mercy upon him!’”

“ I was out to-night—this *very* night—upon the moor, I cry!—hear me!” (shouted the outlaw fiercely;) “ look — my limbs bleed with the thorns and the fences of the fold;—lend me your fingers!—what fear?—I am a Norman like yourself. Haro! Haro! *Roland the unvanquished*—at the bar, and quoit, and thundering stone—I have killed something with *all* of them!—lend me your hand?”

The father held his hand to the body, and returned it smeared with the blood of many wounds, actually occasioned as the wretched creature had described to him.

“ How is this?” he inquired of the raving criminal.

“ I went *out*,” said the dying man, more feebly than hitherto, “ and the *Devil* went along with me;—he has been my pledge full often! ‘ Upon *this* ground,’ said the fiend, and he laughed well, ‘ *you* killed the Saxon shepherd with a mighty hurling-stone—come, I will play games with you for guerdon!’ I have nothing but these rags, said I, and these branded limbs! ‘ Play for the *best you have*’ (said the Devil), and he threw down shining silver at my feet, and I looked round for stones that should be our proof. I remember—ay, years ago, I was a mere boy—and I won such a game upon the Castle turf, that the vanquished hero wept. I said to my foulest enemy, *I would play the Devil before I died for my best chances*. To-night I threw—one—two—three—and the Devil laughed!—hush! he *is* laughing *now*!—hush! (the priest folded the sick and wounded wretch in his fervent embraces, and prayed earnestly that he might relent, and not die so forlorn, and thus unshrived and lost to penitential feeling,)—the devil threw mountains! where they came from he told me not; he won the prize—to-night he cometh for my best estate!—Look—look in my face!” said the outlaw, snatching breath convulsively, “ look at me! I played with a *Devil*!—and he *won*!”

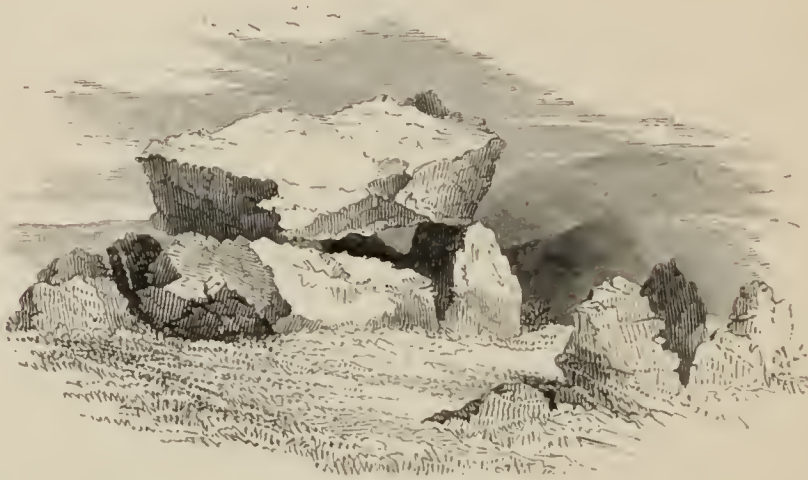
“ Oh, horrible!” groaned the father, “ it is a wicked dream—a wicked dream; I must deal with this detestable phantom more courageously.” He turned to the fire to light the taper he carried in his scrip of office; the fire had burnt to very extinction; again he felt for the outlaw’s hand—for his limbs—for his face—upon the rushy floor all round—many times, and over again—all round. The bell was sounding the midnight watch, and sentinels were changed, and watch-dogs howled afar upon the Stanton boundary. A flash of lightning, blue as the flame of burning sulphur, burnt through the wattled roof, and lighted up the awful chamber. The body had departed—the priest was alone.

Next morning, as the horror-stricken chaplain tottered to his woodland home, he encountered a multitude upon the moor, most of whom were racing

to and fro unto some gigantic stones, which stood not there the day before, and every one wondered!—but he alone did not wonder.

“The Devil was abroad last night, my children,” said the reverend father, “and he has been pitching his *quoits* to some poor soul’s disaster!”

They looked at his pale haggard visage with trembling, and they thought of the “*red sunset*.”



When we returned to our guide, he received his remuneration with a rustic acknowledgment, and twinkled his blue eyes so charmingly, dimpling a very handsome chin the while, that we almost fancied we had seen him before, and in “water-colours.” There was nothing singular in the idea.

“Has the drawing-man, that goes so much to the dame-school, been here lately?” The boy acknowledged the fact with a ready answer. “Oh, yes, sir; he be a Lunnun gentleman, and he do often ga’ down to th’ Dame-skeul. He be away now, sir. He dra’d my sister Dinah a sewin’, and ‘the keeper’s young un a crying;’ and he dra’d little Jones wi’ a dunce’s cap on his head, for running a darnin’ needle under the missises rush-bottom chair.”

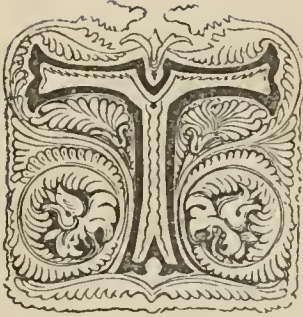
Webster, the artist, whose excellent ideas of juvenile rusticity are enhanced by a faithful intimacy with the original tribe of unsophisticated cottage-children, has lingered at Stanton, with increasing gratification, and the “school” furnished him with many striking subjects for the portfolio. The external outline of Stanton Harcourt Manor and the Church are very pleasing views upon the Ensham side of the grounds; but the day advancing promised fine weather, and we made speed along the quiet and uninterrupted country-road, which runs in the direction north and north-easterly to the next station of our travel.

CHAPTER VII.

ENSHAM, THE VILLAGE, THE CROSS, THE MONASTERY. — HISTORY OF ITS ENDOWMENTS. — WHITSUNTIDE PROCESSION IN 1230. — THE GREVILLES. — THE CHURCH AND ITS FONT. — CASSINGTON, ITS CHURCH, MONSTROSITIES OF ORNAMENTS. — THE CROSS. — “THE PATEN.” — YARNTON. — THE SCHOOLMASTER. — THE CROSS. — THE CHURCH. — ITS ANTIQUITIES. — THE MANOR HOUSE. — ITS EARLY HISTORY AND OCCUPANTS. — ITS SITUATION AND ASPECT. — YARNTON, THE SAXON EARDUNG-TUN, OR “THE DWELLING-TOWN.”

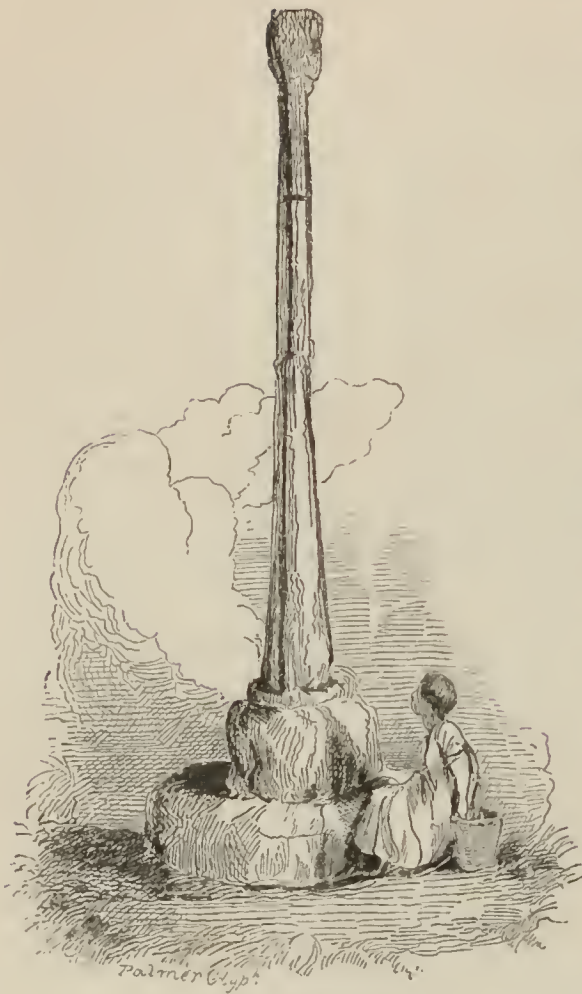


CHAPTER VII.



HE village of Ensham lies rather more than five miles to the north-west of Oxford, Stanton lying south-east from Oxford, and a distance of ten miles. The features of the landscape, upon the journey to Ensham, are the usual open field roads of Oxfordshire, the numerous rivulets and rural arches which span their silent waters, the occasional deep and narrow hedge-roads, or the more open highway trenched deeply on either side, and planted in the hollows with willows, and other liquid-loving green things. Upon the right, from the dense elm woods of Stanton, in the rear, the hills which swell unto the Whytham ridge proceed, covered with solemn trees, one crest of forest verdure. We could meet with no one to exchange civilities with, and we talked over the fancies of the hour at random, and with a determination to please ourselves, for all the wind or the sunshine, whichever might prevail. From outskirts of farming land, plentiful of ochred cottages and homes of other centuries, we arrived into the centre of the village, which is one of the most orderly, clean, and respectable of the *village* description we have ever seen. The habitations for the most part are low, but the streets are wide, and the buildings in the front are more regular than you in general find in such places, where often the principal inn butts out upon the causeway, and the doctor's den runs up into a court by the side of it, where a line of small thatched huts, over the main kennel, abruptly terminates at a wide brook, with a blacksmith's shop upon the bridge, where the church cannot be distinguished from the malt-house, and the market-house is converted into a timber store, or a tannery, and where all the fashionable people live around the "whipping post." Here we sketched the "Old Cross," by the "Town-house," or rather the taper shaft of it, which remains, and with it the very last relic of the old abbey, if we except a part of the foundations which may be traced under the turf of a meadow, to the west of the church. Ensham was a strong garrison of the Britons, when they were beleaguered by the West Saxons, and when, by their adoption of Roman discipline, they proved a serious foe to their rapacious invaders. The Garrison Hill is to be seen on the Oxford road, about half a mile from the bridge.

In 626, although the Britons were powerful in these parts, they had lost Eymesham, or Ensham, which Ceawlyn took in 580, after he and his brother Cuthwulph had defeated the natives at Bedford; and at such period a



Ensham Cross.

monastery for Benedictines was here erected by Ethelman, or Æthelmare, Earl of Cornwall and Devonshire; which foundation was confirmed by Ethelred, King of England, in 1005, who signed their "privilege of liberty with the sign of the Holy Cross" (in the original text). "The Isis," says an historical notice, "after having received the Windrush, flows on to Ensham, Saxon Eiznepham, where anciently was a royal *vill*, amongst very pleasant meadows. Here king Ethelred, by advice of the Archbishop Alphege and Wulstan, held a council in 1009, wherein many decrees, both ecclesiastical and civil, were enacted. In Henry I.'s charter of renewal to Ensham Abbey, among the possessions are enumerated the town of Ensham, and all that appertained to it in meadows, waters, and woods. In 1184 another council

was held here, when Hugh of Grenoble was elected Bishop of Lincoln, in the presence of the king and archbishop, and other elections of bishops and abbots were made. Soon after the Conquest, Termiguis, first bishop of Lincoln, and first bishop appointed by the Conqueror in this country, finding the church in Oxfordshire in danger from the innovations of the Britons, who were by no means reconciled to their conquerors, and who, different with them in religion and its modes, out of sheer hatred to them, he removed the Abbey of Ensham, and added it to that of Marie-Stow, in Lincolnshire. He died, and his viscera were buried at Ensham, in the beginning of the reign of King Henry I., when the monastery of Stow was removed to Ensham, the revenues of which the king much augmented. Henry I. kept a feast at Woodstock, in 1123, and had a prime council there, and then, three days after Epiphany-day, he went out to take pleasure in the park, in chasing such things as were there, and in conversing with his noble company; and Robert, the Bishop of Lincoln, had been speaking with the king as they rode

together, and he left the king but a few paces, when he was stricken from his palfrey by apoplexy, and he died the next day; and *his* bowels, also, were buried at Ensham.

In the year 1230, as it was exorbitant to expect the people in Oxfordshire to pay their respects, proper and pecuniary, at the mother church of Lincoln, the bishop granted that the Whitsuntide processions and solemnities should occur at Ensham. So the people made great and gay work of it, and quickly garnished flower-poles and mustered music and meats, and provided a dragon and a dragon banner to commemorate the defeat which their Saxon ancestors had given to the sulky Britons, and every one thronged to Ensham. To use the expressive exaggeration, "all the world and his wife were there;" the Oxford scholars amongst the rest. Whether these learned mischief-makers jeered at the clowns of the country, or kissed the pretty rosy-lipped girls too frequently, or let fly their arrows at the crimson-hosed calves of the dignitaries of the bailiwick, or flung peg tankards about too merrily, I know not; but in unanimous determination, the Enshamites, old and young, men, women, and children, resented the affronts offered to them and their town, and their dragon, and their nice wenches, and with staves, and pikes, and knives, and kicks (the women scratched after the manner of their northern ancestors), they expelled the scholars, who ran for their lives to their own city. The road to Oxford was strewn with caps, torn cloaks, psalters, Greek, Latin, and pools of blood, boots, wigs, and satchels. One scholar lay here, and another there, in the vicinity of Ensham; but alackaday! out of fifty or more of these lingering creatures, six or seven were stone dead; the rest were so notched, and jelly-fied, and compressed, that they said nothing but "miserere! miserere!" all the way they were borne to the hostelry. The bishop heard of this, and he turned pale; he spit in his fist and grasped his pastoral staff as if it had been a pole-axe. His mitre was cocked all on one side, and he looked the very picture of an angry apostle. He took but nine strides into an adjoining church, muttering wrathfully with every footfall, and there he excommunicated the authors and the abettors of the sedition, whether barons, billmen, apothecaries, cherry-cheeked damsels, ale-sellers, and every child "up to the use of reason!" excluding them from Christian society, and denying them the comfort of "Shrift" until the next feast of St. Bartlemy, and the scholars could not resume their lectures till the offenders had suffered severe punishments.

So terminated the commencement of the celebrated Ensham Whitsun games, the origin of the existing fair, or annual feast. King Stephen, so kind to the Lady of Harcourt, granted a market here. Henry II. and

Henry III. chartered the monastery. There were other charters by Edward II. In the "Registrum de Eynesham," art. 194., we read in Latin text "Of a dispute which happened between the Abbot of Eynesham, and the Abbot of Ozeney, about a fishery at Wodeton, and about a certain annual payment." Bishop Farmer gives a large collection of references to public records relating to Eynsham, most of which are preserved in the Tower of London. The Bodleian Library contains (Num. 435. MS.) the "Liber Statutorum, Monasterii de Eynsham." Under several heads, amongst other regulations, we find "How those are to be received who would enter the Order:" "How novices are to be treated and kept:" "How they are to be educated." In article xth, "the study of true wisdom" is inculcated: in article xith, "Study and application to the Holy Scriptures; and that crucifying the body to all worldly things, they should cleave to heavenly comforts only." From these more important considerations we cannot help to smile, when we read in other articles the minutiae of the rule, "when the nails should be cut:" "Of those who are thirsty in the dormitory:" "Of those who take physic:" "Of the baths, the kitchen, and refectory," &c. &c. Adam was the first of the abbots, and Anthony Dunstan, alias Kitchen, was the last abbot. He was appointed in 1530. He subscribed to the King's Supremacy 1534, and surrendered, with his bevy of eight monks, in 1539. He afterwards came (by his subserviencies) to the bishopric of Llandaff. According to Dugdale, the abbey was valued at the Suppression at 44*l.* 12*s.* 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ *d.* The site of the monastery was granted in the 35th of Henry VIII. to Sir Edward Northe, Knight, and William Darage. 37th Henry VIII. it was again granted out to Edward, Earl of Derby. After other changing of hands, it was purchased by the Marlborough family, and the present duke is the lay impropiator. The abbey formerly payed a contribution to studies at Oxford, called the "Einsham Schools." In one of Anthony Wood's MSS., there is a sketch, taken in 1657, of the west end of Einsham Abbey Church, which consisted of two very spacious towers, with a large west window in the middle space between them, under which is a great door of entrance, and two lesser under each tower. There are some walls attached to the tower, and some pillars of the church and cloister on the north side. There are two imperfect seals of this abbey in the Augmentation Office; one to a deed temp. Rich. III.; a receipt of rent "40*s.*" from the prior and convent of Burcester, for premises near Doddington. The other seal is with the Surrender; viz. three divisions; the central one canopied: this is occupied by the Blessed Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus: a female saint is niched on either side: an abbot with pastoral staff occupies a lower arch in the central lines: the

legends are imperfect. The benefactors' names were in course of time from the first institution, D'Oili, Cheyne, De Broe, Arundel, Gray, Clinton, Hareng, Lucie, Durant, Blunt, De Spencer or Despenser, De la Marre, and its own rich abbotts.

The pensions to the last occupiers were —

			<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Antonius Dunstone.	Abbas	-	-	cxxxij	vj viij
Edmundus Raynforde.	Prior	-	-	x	o o
Georgius Brodehurst.	Sub-prior	-	-	vj	xij iiij
Robertus Forde.	Cellerarius	-	-	vij	o o

Thomas Mill, Thomas Philip, Thomas Knolles, Jotres Kockseter, Wittmus Buck, Johannes Hedges, received a *vj l. vjs. viij d.* Dugdale notices the disasters attending certain persons, who possessed this monastery and lands appertaining after the Dissolution. He quotes from Sir Henry Spelman's "History of Sacrilege." We cannot follow the exact words: the substance is correctly this:—

Lodovick Greville had Mickleton, a manor belonging to Ensham Abbey, and he had two sons. And Edward, the youngest, in shooting off a piece, slew by chance-medley his elder brother, and so succeeded to his inheritance. Lodovick, the father, in Elizabeth's reign, stood mute upon his arraignment for poisoning one, whose will he had counterfeited, and he was pressed to death, according to the manner of the old law. Edward, his son, was afterwards knighted, and he mortgaged the abbey to one Fisher, a spinner of London, for a trifling sum, who encouraged the spendthrift thereupon to grow further into his trammel by lending him money at compound interest, until, by forfeiture and entanglement, the estate became his own absolutely. Sir Edward Greville by degrees wasted his patrimony, for he sold the one part in Warwickshire to the Lord Treasurer Cranfield, to whom he became bailiff. Old Fisher, the wary spinner of webs (a human spider), put over the abbey (transferred it) to his rich son, Sir Edward Fisher, who also had been "dubbed," and he, with extreme litigation, briberies, &c., was driven to part with his principal rents, and to live in terror of the bailiffs.

"Sir Edward Greville," says Spelman, "had a son who broke his leg over a stile. He died in consequence: one of his daughters was married to Sir Arthur Ingram."

The first church of Ensham was dedicated to our "Saviour;" the present is dedicated to Saint Leonard. It is a fine church, in a bad situation, buried in a corner. It is a specimen of the perpendicular, with a decorated chancel,

a nave with two aisles, and a tower at the west end of the south aisle. The foliations are cut out of an eastern window of three lights. The lower part is concealed by a shabby screen. The three side windows on the south side are perfect, with fragments of the original stained glass in the head. The roof is high pitched, the timbers are hidden by a coved plaster ceiling. The chancel arch is decorated, springing from corbels richly moulded. The nave is lofty; galleries of modern manufacture obscure the windows of the aisles. The west window of five lights is much subdivided with traceries. There is much rubbish lying at the west end of the church; and upon the seats there are a few remains of ancient carving. A grand breaking up of carving and wood-work appears to have taken place here at several periods. This led us to inquire of the simple woman who acted as portress upon the occasion (and who listened with attention to our praise of the carved Stuart "fold" upon panels near to the chancel arch), "What becomes of carving like this when it is removed?"

"I have a good deal of it, sir! I have had a pretty big parcel on it at one time or another, I have."

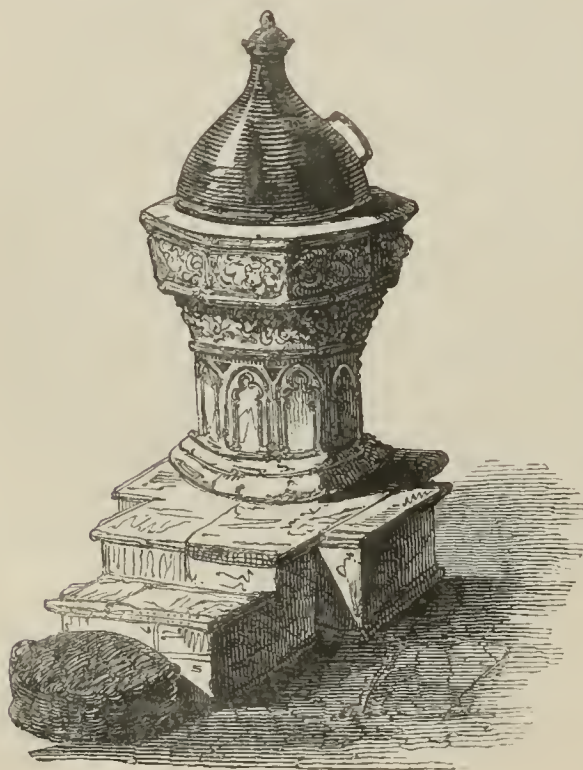
"Have you any with such a pattern as this upon it now?" pointing to the specimen.

"No, sir, I can't say as I have a bit on it; I do always burn it for my fires or my oven, when I do get hold of some."

Nice employment this "scorching" of religious and consecrated work!

If we ourselves had swept Ensham Church of the lumber at one end of it, it would have been the preface to our appearance, probably, before a clerical justice of peace, — we should have done *sacrilege* forsooth! Oh, ye sleek crows of the sanctuary, who stare superciliously at mankind of low degree over the stiffened barrier of a white cravat, and who touch vulgar things with funeral gloves, and ladies' fingers with kids of lilac, do unthrottle, and talk English to us, and tell us something about these surprising things!

Ensham Church can boast of a handsome font, placed at the west



Ensham Font.

end of the nave, but altogether the interior is displeasing. Every thing beautiful is mutilated or misplaced; every thing ugly is on the grander scale. Say with old Cenci in the tragedy, that we have hardened impudence “*so to revile a man’s peculiar taste.*”

The road hence to Cassington, about two miles distant in the north-east direction, is a tolerably plain country road, frequently traversed by the arches of rude bridges, which form as many lifts upon the highway as there are ridges upon the spine of a boatman’s horse; but summer and the beauties of summer-time make ruts and ridges agreeable, and upon this occasion the triumph of the sunshine gave satisfaction to our lengthened ride. There was moisture every where and around,—upon the soil, the stems, the leaves, and the stones by the way; and when the light wind hung motionless in the cooler air, the pools looked deeper than ever, twinkling but a-while ago with the impetuous rainfall. In thorough dry weather the stifling surface of the road, suffocating you with every whirling gust of air, seems to abbreviate the anticipation of making a long journey a short one, by any mental amusement; but now space seemed all exposed, with a wide prospect of hope and healthfulness, and distance was deprived of its more trifling disadvantages by the cool mutation of the fervent sky. The warmer hue of recently shorn meadow-land rose in a mellow contrast to the slight fresh green of the thriving corn-field; the trees drooping in sultry heat with separate sadness, blended deeper hues, and assimilated in one solemn serene effect of light and shadow. The last spear of the contentious rain had been hurled; dusky, smoky, loose-fingered clouds lodged before the wind, but a pleasant silvery light followed the sun’s eye; the birds resumed their concert, with a jovial chorus; and the blue faint mist, slowly retiring, bosomed itself between the irregular distances of the forest trees, miles upon miles afar and away. Every cottage-garden attested a delightful change; the earth, which yesterday could scarce sustain the vitality of the beauties of the flowery space, ever since morning was vividly green with new-born tiny weeds, rising up, like mendicants thronging to a public feast, to display their humble face, and to partake of the general bounty.

Cassington was formerly in the parish of St. Mary of Ensham. The illustrious Clintons—the founders of the Church—lived here; and here, in the reign of Edward II., the Montacutes, by permission, converted their former mansion into a place of strength, which endured until later years, when the materials were devoted to the construction of the vicarage at Ensham, and castle and moat became things of history only and of slight remembrance. The Church, wherein much of the original remains, was built by Geoffrey,

son of that Geoffrey Clinton who was chamberlain and treasurer to King Henry I., and who was founder of the Monastery and Castle of Kenilworth. He was Lord of Cassington. It was consecrated to the honour of St. Peter about the year 1155 by the Bishop of Lincoln, at whose entreaties Clinton, or de Glympton, as it has been written, erected it. The abbot of Ensham was enjoined to find a chaplain, with advice and consent of the archdeacon of Oxford; at the time it was seized by Henry VIII., the living belonged to the Priory of St. Frideswide, in Oxford. It is an oblong church, without aisles, the tower and spire in the centre. The main structure is Norman; instance, the walls of the chancel with the groined stone vault and bold round ribs springing from shafts with plain-cushioned caps,—the small window on the north side of the chancel,—the wall within which is set the eastern window,—the lower part of the tower and the window on the north side of it; the plain east arch of the same, and ornamented western arch; the walls and three windows of the nave, and the font. Other parts of this regular church are in the decorated style. The lights of the eastern window are double arches, cinquefoiled. There are some ancient wooden seats in the western part of the building, a round tub-font, and a damaged screen. Amongst the bequests, &c. upon the south wall of the west end, is mention of a Mr. Plaisterer, who applied 20*l.* to charitable purposes; we had made a memorandum of such a name previously with the charities of Stanton Harcourt: whilst the wounds of the poor are so manifold, and the chinks of their battered hovel walls so numerous, we should pray that the generation of such “Plaisterers” may long endure. There are slabs and brasses upon the floor of the Church, with heraldries to the memories of Bourchier, Reynolds, Gregory, and others of good repute. There is also a fine floral cross in brass to one Roger Cheney, and a brass in the wall near the pulpit to Thomas Neale, Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, 1590. The Latin epitaph was written by himself in his lifetime; but the register does not declare when he died, or where he was buried; the pew above which the brass is fixed was wood-work from the home where he resided. In “Nicholl’s Progresses” you will find the speeches made by Neale and others to Queen Elizabeth, when she visited Oxford. There were some curious paintings on the walls on the inside of the tower, and on the timbers of the roof, previous to those considerable improvements which took place in 1842,—all of these, with the exception of a series of circular wreathes upon the soffit of a Norman arch, and the “emblems of the Passions,” an angel, and monograms on the inside of the south door, and the figure, too, in the window near (supposed to be St. Barbara), have been whitewashed over. Sketches of the original set are

preserved among the valuable drawings of "the Oxford Society for promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture." To the south of the east window upon the same wall is a tablet to the memory of one of the rectors. (Escutcheon, 6 Lions Sable.) The western window is now filled with handsome painted glass—an imitation of the ancient scriptural series. There are thirteen compartments, and the hues and powers of the substitution are admirably contrived. Externally, the pitch of the roof at the west end appears to have been altered. There is a remarkable course of grotesque heads and figures beneath the parapet: the monstrosities and singularities deserve minute inspection.

"Dr. Stukely," said my companion of the pilgrimage, referring to the like sculptures upon Magdalen College at Oxford, says, in his accustomed dry way, "the whimsical figures in the quadrangle over the buttresses, which amuse the vulgar, *are the licentious inventions of the mason!*"

"Well," I replied, "there are numerous opinions upon the whimsical and disgusting forms sculptured upon the exterior of religious edifices, and carved in wood upon the internal decorations and furnitures. Sometimes, as in the wood carvings of Sedilia and their loose bracketted drop-down seats, and in the panning of the pews, the artist may have dared to express his own licentiousness, or to caricature hypocrisy, which is generally done by investing the fox or wolf with clerical garments, &c."

"But why then so constantly these gaping deformities, where neither allusion nor direct satire were conveyed?" repeated my friend.

"In the Norman period," I answered him, "and until the destruction of Catholic churches, '*Legends of Saints,*' and traditional '*Mysteries,*' were oftentimes subjects of deliberation and conversation amongst the common people. It was believed that the reign of the devil and his host was always strong and jealous; that men were surrounded by unseen spiritual foes, who waged against the soul's safety, and that, above all, holy places were objects of especial hatred with the infernal spirits, and that nothing was so hurtful to them as penance or prayer. With these were allied the souls of lost men, who, in fact, were allies to the hellish ministration; therefore, to embody all these ideas, the church itself was represented as beleaguered by demons and all frightful monsters, craving for saint and backslider, the reprobate and the recluse, in like malice; and it was believed that these stones were but images of the real things, which hovered betimes in thunder and tempest, and by midnight, in the wide open air. The sound of the holy bell was supposed to be a great affright to them, and the music of the pleading choir, and the procession of the Image of Christ's Sufferings on the Cross, which was their

shame and defeat, was to them an intolerable agony and increase of woe. Often were these devils made with outlandish animal configuration, because the same legends told, with ready exaggeration, of the uncouth jumblements of man and beast, which hurried and tempted the Anchorites and penitents of old in the Egyptian wilderness, rising altogether in shocking flight and wild array, —

“ As a flame
 Stirred by the air, under a cavern gaunt :
 Pigmies and Polyphemes by many a name,
 Centaurs and satyrs, and such shapes as haunt
 Wet clefts, and lumps neither alive nor dead, —
 Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.” — *Witch of Atlas.*

South and south-west from the churchyard, in which there is the socket of an old cross shaft, you look upon a fine rural country, with the old moated farm nearer, and the uplands and well-wooded domains of the Abingdon family in the far distance. We heard a shrill sweet laugh, and behold there were small rosy-faced brats and tiny shoeless urchins, dodging behind the tombs, and peeping at us with an air of wonderful playfulness and intimacy. The churchyard is wide; one-fourth of it is bounded by melodious piggeries, whose cloistered octaves are more pleasing to this generation than would be the Sanctus, or the Litany of the anathematised Papists. The sweep of the north side consists of numerous venerable thatched cottages, in a line together, whose thresholds have been the bound of many a merry wedding and many a doleful funeral for several generations, to a certainty. The young fellow who keeps the humble tavern near to the church gate gave us a cheerful glass of fine Oxfordshire ale, and introduced us to his small family. He is the shoe-maker, the tailor, and the inn-keeper at Cassenton, and almost as well known and commended as “famous Mr. Brown,” the violoncello performer at the church of Cassington, who clears many half-pints from the glazier by shaking the glass out of the old church windows when winterly weather allows of such a zealous exertion. We inquired of the host for the celebrated “*Cassenton Paten*,” a portion of the old service plate of the altar, and we were directed “a bit of a way down the village” to the cottage tenanted by the parish clerk, whose little daughter had been guide to us at the church. The woman who displayed the curiosity brought it down stairs from some nook aloft, and with it a tankard and an ewer, which formed part of the “Sacrament ware.” The paten, or plate, is composed of brass. It is $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. There is little silver plate in the churches of Oxfordshire. It was devoted by loyalists to King Charles’s use, during the Civil Wars. The “Paten” appears once to have been rivetted to

some kind of a stand. The serpent, with human face, crowned, is entwining the tree of forbidden fruit. Adam and Eve are upon either side. It is the crisis of their error, when "she took the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." The garden they are in is embattled round. The inner ornament around the depth of the paten is graceful, and the ornament upon the outer rim is well designed. Next to the figures, and around the subject is a curious Gothic lettering, of which the letters forming the words "Deus Creavit" are most distinct. The letters upon the scroll, beneath the branches of the tree, are almost obliterated. They show you also the centre of another sacred vessel; probably an offertory basin, ornamented with two figures, carrying a bunch of grapes on a pole, in allusion to that passage of Scripture, "And they came unto the brook of Eschol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two on a staff."

The sun now, from sparkling leaves, threw silvery glances into the sweet deep lanes, which lead from the more beaten track into the bosky precincts of Yarnton village, which is but a trifling distance from Cassington, and as sweet a home of invitation to a wearied pilgrim as heart, if true to nature, could desire. With the descent of the road there the hedge rows meet with odorous acquaintance, and nod to each other in the promptings of the playful breeze, with garlands of all dear wild-flowers, which neither can be traced by artifice, or honoured sufficiently with tripping verses of the pastoral song. Such were the scenes which Gessner, in his truthful Idylls, sketched with unrivalled mastership; and the Illustrations *by Gessner* to the German work display the astonishing memory of a worshipper in those summer temples, festooned as they are with woodbine and bryony, and embosomed in nooks of complete fairy-land, such as would break the heart of a shepherd to gaze upon in captivity, or even to behold, so faithfully pictured, away from "Father-Land" in a mournful dream. Fine lofty trees shadow the winding of the road, deep fields and straggling orchards lie right and left, seen through the swarth pillars of the giant canopy, and

"Cold springs run
To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass."

As a youth that hath gazed on beauty at cottage window, or at courtier chamber, borne all the while away in tedious wandering, turns with saddened spirit, because a hope is frozen as soon as rained upon the thirsty soul, and murmurs his regret, so we spoke together of the sorrow to leave such charms behind, where the heart craved wilfully to tarry in the bowers breathing

luxurious invitations, and whispering syren welcome, fast and free, and upon every side. A glimpse at Yarnton is the mere odour of a goodly feast. The road leading to the "Church" and the "Hall" is upon the right hand as you continue through the village. There is a wheelwright's shop, open to inquirers who would learn of the doubtful ways. At a blacksmith's forge or a wheelwright's shed you can never fail of meeting all the vulgar wisdom of the vicinity. We were directed to "the Schools." On inquiring there for the clerk, a buxom rosy-elbowed spinster appeared, to whom we gave our faith for the assertion, that "she was as good as the clerk any time, if we wished to see the church!"

"Where's the schoolmaster?" we inquired.

"Oh, sister's the schoolmaster!"

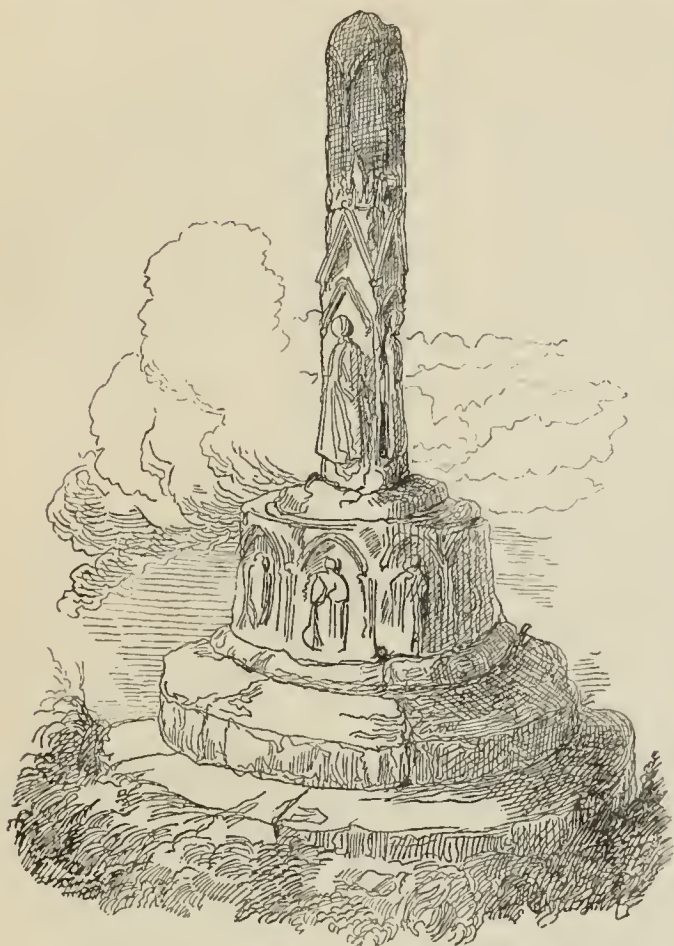
"Come along, then!" we cried to this lady of sophisticated gender, and she conducted us along a secluded lane to the object of our inquiry. As she clinked the keys, and trudged manfully along, she gave loud voice to much local information, which would scarcely be contained upon an ordinary sheet of paper.

St. Martin of Tours was saying mass, and, to the astonishment of the devout congregation, he was observed to smile. The sacristan was more than any scandalized at the circumstance, but not so much when his reverend master instructed him thereupon, after the celebration of the offices. "Francis," said the saint, "Francis, my son, thou knowest the two women with the odd attire, who kneel fast by the communion rails, and chatter so much in the presence of *Him* they assemble to adore. When I gave the blessing at the 'Creed,' the Devil himself, horns, hoofs, and tail, stood near to them, and wrote down upon parchment their irreverent twitterings. At the 'Pater Noster' he had nearly filled both sides of the sheet, all but one or two lines, and he looked confused. Soon afterwards I turned a third time, and the Devil was frantic that he had not space to continue the calumny and detractions they said to each other, and in a passion he seized the parchment in his teeth, and placed his hoof upon it, and made trial to stretch the surface with all his might!—then, may Heaven forgive me!—I smiled."

Ask Mary the clerk, the sister of the schoolmaster at Yarnton, no questions! She is a well-informed person, and the impromptus are a satisfactory quantum.

The Church is situated before the Hall or "Manor-House," and near to the road guarded by a simple wall, which is the boundary of the funereal soil, and passing this you are first occupied with attention of the basement hold

and shaft of a mutilated stone cross, directly opposite to the southern porch of the building. The transverse section of that part of the relic which stands



between the steps and the shaft would form four bends, or portions of a circle, and four acute angles, interplaced and alternate. The section would be much of the figure of the similar outline upon an old "Nuremberg token." Four armed figures are represented upon the face of this portion or plinth. A light moulding forms arched work above the sculpture. Upon the shaft, in ornamented niches, are indications of whole-length figures, which have suffered by defacement of the weather. The two crosses of Ensham and Yarnton have a striking similarity; but the upper part of the Ensham pillar is more complete. Within memory

there were other crosses near to Cassington, each church having been formerly a chapelry, and then a vicarage, of Ensham Abbey. At these crosses, on solemn occasions, the religious performed pious service: here the coffin of the poor man, or the plumed hearse of gentility, halted, whilst "De Profundis" or "In te speravi" were chanted by many mournful voices: here proclamations of a civil nature were made; and wonderful news, affecting the public weal, was frequently told by some belted horseman (pausing in his hot speed over the lone country) to the bewildered hinds. If goodwoman Jobson had lost her market nag, it was cried there by the inestimable voice of clerk or bedesman. If York or Lancaster were up or down, thence flew the bloody tidings of defeat or exultation for the favoured party. If famine or pest prevailed afar, terror commenced and prayers were whispered at the "Cross of the Village." Something too, may-be, of plighted truth in the fair moonlight trysting, and of kisses which have ratified oaths repeated at the sanctuary: and murder may have sprinkled the venerable stone with innocent blood; for

murder and malice can lean upon God's altar, as often they have done before, and smile, without blushing or trembling, reserved for the lightning of surer vengeance!

‡ The church of Yarnton is dedicated to Saint Bartholomew; it is in the deanery of Woodstock, as also are the churches of Harcourt, Ensham, and Cassington. It is an early English church, with late additions. It consists of a nave and chancel, with a south aisle; "Spencer's Chapel" or aisle at the east end, and a south porch. There is a tower to the west end of the south aisle. The pillars and the arches of this church are early English. The tower was erected in 1611 by Sir Thomas Spencer. There is a well-carved screen at the western end of the south aisle, with the inscription —

"Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king!"

There is a handsome screen of similar fashion at the entrance to the Spencer Chapel. There is much of the original painted glass preserved from the malice of the base puritanical military who were quartered near to the village in 1645. These remains are to be observed particularly within the traceries of the north window. Two Benedictine monks (curates from Ensham Abbey), a bishop labelled *Nicholaus*, and an archbishop labelled *Thomas*, are excellent specimens of ancient skill. The eastern window, which has three plain lancet-shaped lights, is adorned with painted glass—Saint Bartholomew, with the name affixed; but this, with other portions, very admirable in themselves and very old, were presentations from the stores of Alderman Fletcher, who had considerable property in the parish, and devoted his purse and his heart to the embellishment of this church in a proper style. His tomb, which is a faithful copy of an early brass ornamented altar tomb, is near to the centre of the building. Thereupon he is etched in brass, in an official gown; and this inscription is added:—

Yarnton! my childhood's home!

Do thou receive

This parting gift;

My dust to thee I leave.

William Fletcher,

Of Oxford,

1826.

Aged 87 years.

The good fame which the venerable and excellent man left behind him will embalm his memory, even when the church (which Heaven forefend!) shall lie in ruins around his pious sepulchre. He made bequests to the charities of this village, and directed that a dole should be administered upon his anni-

versary. Some years since, a sculptured length of alabaster was discovered hidden under the floor of a house in the parish of St. Peter's, in the east of Oxford, near to St. Edmund's Hall. It was purchased by Alderman Fletcher for Yarnton church, and is fixed in the wall between the base of the east window and the communion table. The costumes represented denote it to be of the early part of the fifteenth century. The first compartment is honorary to the blessed Virgin as Queen of Saints: four others refer to our Saviour's Life and Passion. Here the military have the peculiar *hanging sleeve* characterising the reigns of Henry IV. and V., of which the satirist Oceleve:—

“ What is a lord without his men ?
 I put case — that his foes him assail
 Suddenly in the street, what help shall he
 (Whose sleeves encumbrous so side trail)
 Do to his lord? — he may not him avail :
 In such a case he is but a woman ;
 He may not stand him in stead of a man ;
 His arms two, have right enough to do, ~
 And somewhat more, his sleeves up to hold.”

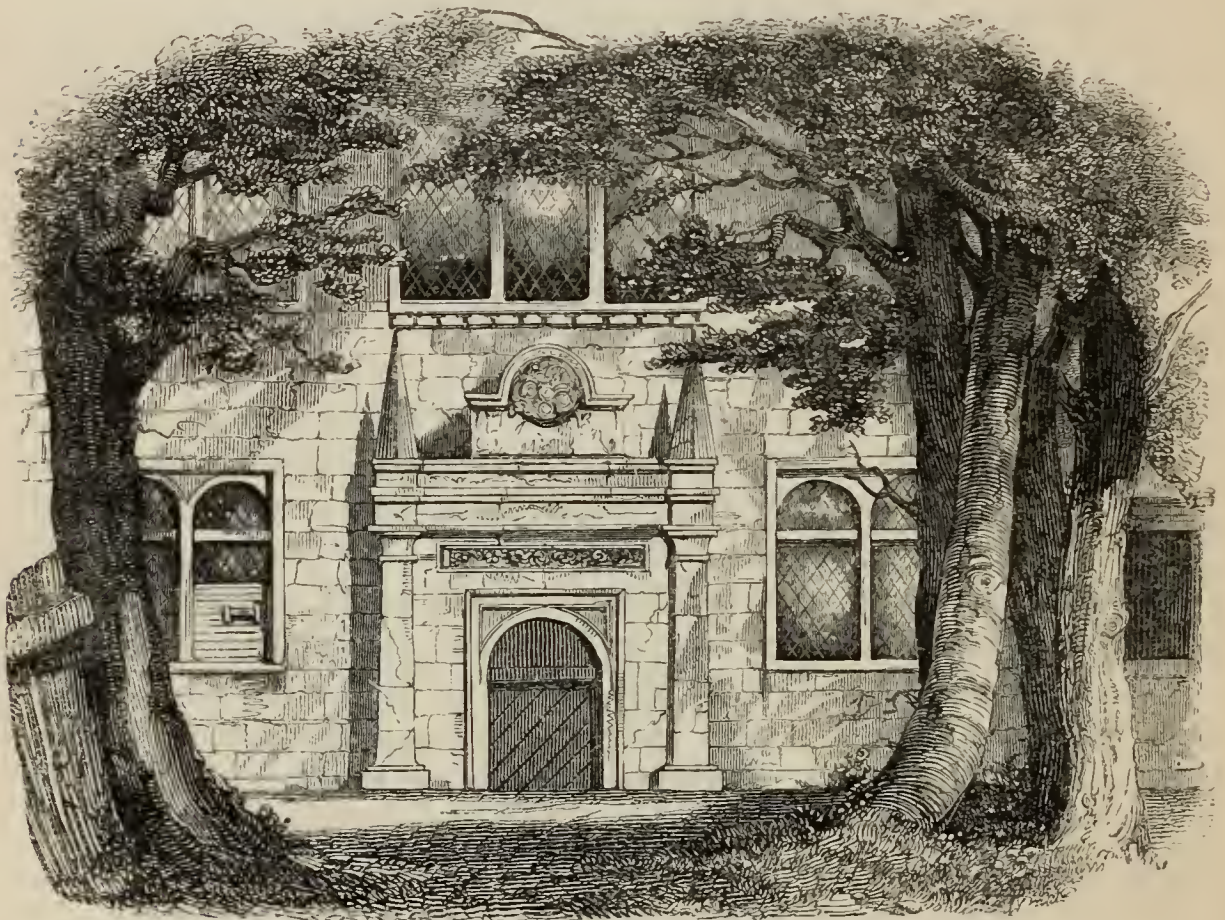
Pride and Waste Clothing, &c.

There is a handsome octagonal font adjoining the tomb of Alderman Fletcher, and near to the south entrance. Its ornaments are a grotesque border, with escutcheons and fleurs-de-lis. The south porch has a plastered cornice of scroll-work of the date of James I.

The “ Spencer Aisle ” is ordinarily considered the “ curiosity ” or “ sight ” of the parish church. It is 31 feet by 18 feet 9 inches in measurement, and contains, besides mural and pavement slabs to the memories of the Mordaunts and others, two distinguished monuments of the Spencer family. On the left wall and near to the eastern window, as you enter, is a gorgeous tomb and pillar and canopy monumental superstructure to the memory of the Sir William Spencer, first of the Spencers of Yarnton, and third son of Sir John Spencer of Althorp, who bought this manor from the Rutlandshire Durants for the settlement of this son. His wife, who was daughter of Sir Francis Bowyer of the county of Middlesex, is recumbent by his side. They left issue two sons and five daughters, who are represented kneeling beneath the effigies. So far as intricate adornment, goggle-eyed girls and boys in uncouth vesture, and frightful heraldry can make a tomb remarkable, the effect is produced. Very few gentlemen of taste, even although susceptible of posthumous flattery (to use the Hibernicism), would now select such ineloquent grandeur to surmount their honourable dust. The tomb nearer to the entrance is in better taste, and more free from the errors of the Tudor

toy-shop. There are bold marble figures of the second Sir Thomas Spencer, the last of the family, and of Lady Spencer and their son William; also the kneeling and recumbent figures of four of their daughters, who by the death of that son became co-heiresses of the estate. When the property was purchased by the Dashwoods, who hold the present patronage of the place, the one-fourth share of Jane Spencer (who had married Robert Spencer, earl of Teviot, and brother of that earl of Sunderland killed at Newbury 1643,) was not sold with the rest of the property. The ceiling of this chapel is of bold panelling, divided in the ascent, by closer beams or mouldings, into smaller spaces. These are blazoned with painted stars; and at the intersection of the greater beams of the panelling there are floral pendants, which terminate in an acorn-like finial stud.

Leaving the church, we inquired of our sturdy damsel if any thing curious belonged to the old "Manor?"



Yarnton Manor House.

She answered us in the negative; but there was a something in the aspect of the retired mansion which contradicted her hasty declaration. The "fold yard" — for such it appeared to be — of this farming residence was

strewn with fragments of the "old days;" and some out buildings there were decidedly in connection with a foundation of several centuries. Madam Lisle, the proprietress, was absent. Her handsome daughter kindly bade us welcome to the inspection of the interior; and she ingenuously, and with such frankness as we find most rare in a wicked world of outward observances, guided us cheerfully through wainscotted parlours and contracted passages of the strange dwelling, and led us into the curious bed-chambers and vacant rooms aloft, and lent to us every facility we could have desired in scrutiny of her venerable English home. One of the apartments is a richly ornamented chamber, adorned with a chimney-place and decorations of the earliest part of the seventeenth century. The remains of painting and gilding clung to the cornices and heraldry, and looked grimly fine upon the modern accompaniments of the retired room. This appears to have been a "state chamber." The Hall in the south of the ground story is a fine specimen of its kind, and can readily be peopled in the eye of imagination with the forms which flourished when Stuart and Cromwellite wrestled upon close field for the important mastery. There is a deep transomed eastern window, with an ample board or table running along the side of the wall, illuminated by its solemn glare. A huge fire-place, surrounded by stonework of massive order, is fixed into the northern wall, and over it ponderous carved heraldry, with monstrosities sufficient to scare even a ghost from its moonlight wanderings. An ancient screen forms an appropriate appendage to the centre of the Hall. Opposite to the eastern window is a boundary of carved panneling, the cornice of which is made up of thirteen alternate male and female Caryatides, supporting trifling arches in low relief. On the same side as the fire-place, and near to the ceiling, are three wide and ugly "bull's-eye" ventilators, trimmed with stone edging. Between the window and fire-place there hangs a wishy-washy oil-colour portrait of the second Sir William Spenser, who fled from the insults of the Puritans during the civil wars, and took shelter in the metropolis. He lived under the grievance of a serious fine upon his Yarnton estate, and dying in 1607, was buried at the church of St. Martins in the Fields. We have abandoned ourselves to the conviction that Yarnton Hall is haunted by some very charming young people, and if, instead of commissioning ourselves to the pursuit of antiquity, we had equipped a chivalric Rosinante in quest of recent beauties, then by the "Vow of the Peacock!" we say, we should have unstrung our minstrel flute from the girdle, and have made the shades of verdure around echo, to the panegyric of some wonderful dark eyes, which yet may render that interesting mansion a perennial theme of romance, to

younger worthies than the two sedate Benedicts who strolled thither in the summer of 1844. The exterior and front of the Manor House is shaded by a group of lofty full-branching elm trees. The doorway is after the fashion of the time when Sir Thomas Spencer erected the building (1612), almost upon the site of an older one. Columns and pilasters, and places for heraldic distinction, project over and around the main entrance. The plain front is occupied by wide transomed casements, distributed unequally upon either side. The south side of the Hall is festooned with ivy. Grateful for the courtesies we had received, and the pleasures we had enjoyed in rambling over the wide interior, not forgetting a fine dairy occupying the former "servants' hall," we took leave of the mansion.

Yarnton is situated at equal distances from Woodstock and Oxford. It was formerly termed Eardung-tun—"the Dwelling Town,"—the word *Eardung** signifying "a dwelling." By corruption it has been called Yarrington, thence Yarnton. Dr. V. Thomas says, "It is singular that the name of the village of Erdington, near to Birmingham, has also by the same sort of process been changed into Yarnton." I resided at that place much of my boyhood, and I think (respectfully) it was always called "Yenton," not that it makes difference as to proof of the corruption, for in both cases it is well distinguished. When King Ethelred, in 1005, confirmed the grant of Ethelmar to the Abbey of Ensham, we find included there "ten mansions of common field at 'Erdintunc.'" Remigius, a retainer of William the Norman, succeeded Walwin in the see of Dorchester. He transferred his see to the city of Lincoln, or, as the Normans termed it, "Nicol," as a place of greater importance. In the year of our Lord 1091, Remigius, or Rémy, wished to erect a suitable residence, and he selected in his own mind Slatford, or Sleaford, which belonged to the monks of St. Marie Stowe, near Gainsborough. To effect this, he got himself appointed a commissioner (at least such he was) under the Inquisition, to register the Saxon property in these parts, and with subtilty he inserted his own name into the Domeboe Report, as positive owner of Hardintone (Yarnton); by which fraud he called it his own, and as such bartered it for his peculiar desire to the monks of Stowe, as appertaining to Ensham, which he exchanged thereby for Sleaford, where afterwards he built an episcopal residence. In 1092, Robert Bloet (Blewitt postea) restored the monks of Ensham the whole of their rightful property. In the year of our Lord 1154, King Henry II. seized Yarnton Manor, and incontinently bestowed it on Bernard de St. Valery, his favourite,

* The letters perhaps spoken in olden time as *E-ar* (presto) instead of *Ear* would reach the semblance of *Yar* as the call "*Here!*" (rusticé) bears the sound *Yere*.

who attended Richard the Lion-hearted to Palestine, and was slain by a stone thrown from a fortification at the siege of Acre. The property of the Abbey of Ensham, and this place inclusive, was bestowed and retaken from favourite to favourite, from the vassal to the crown, until, in 1294, a deed of agreement was entered into between the abbots of Rewley and Ensham, that the former (to whom the manor of Yarnton had been given in endowment wrongfully by Edmund, successor of Henry III.'s brother, the Earl of Cornwall) should continue in possession of the land, paying the great tithe to Ensham, the small tithe to the vicar of Yarnton. Henry VIII. gave this manor to George Owen, his physician, of King's College, partly for his professional flatteries and costly aphrodisiacs, and in part for the sum of 676*l.* paid by him into the *Court of Augmentation*. John Durant bought it in 1544. Between 1579—1584, Sir John Spencer purchased the estate. Sir Robert Dashwood, upon failure of heirs male, became possessed by purchase of three fourths of this property; the other quarter was sold by the representatives of the fourth daughter, the Lady Teviot to one Benjamin Swete, Esquire. Lady Spencer, the mother, died in 1712. The families of the purchasers retain possession since that time of the respective and proportional shares.

The evening hastened near; the clouds circled round to the glowing west, where all the beauty of the day soon concentrated. Obstructed for some time by a drunken potter at the Begbrooke Gate, we hurried on to Wolvercote. A long-bellied, rough-haired lurching dog attached himself to our forward route; presently he turned off abruptly by the broad water-side, and made for the covers in the hollow below, threading in and out with vigilance and sagacity; disappearing for a considerable while in the depth of the wood, a shrill whistle recalled him to the pathway by the river, where an ugly, ill-favoured, half-tinker fellow rushing from the willows, and, apprehensive of our commencing scrutiny, beckoned him, to a more seeming honesty of employment. It was the tramping poacher and his accomplice. That faithful dishonest quadruped had been trained to all of the queerest chances—rope-ends, broken ribs in succession, traps, duck-shot, and pitfalls. He worked hard, and he fared worse. Probably what the gamekeeper could not perform for the slight of his nimble feet, the brutal master in some surly humour would perform with a bludgeon, or a stone and a string, licked and caressed even until the doom of death. Such is the fate of those human lurching hounds who snift at the heels of their wicked superior; such a hound was Buckingham to Richard III., and such was the cowardly Cromwell (cowardly only in disgrace) to the avaricious master who sent him on his ungodly errand—to burst open the shrines of saints, to strip the sanctuary

of the temple of worship, to do any thing to supply the fuel of untameable desire; of whom the old ballad;—

“ Both plate and chalys came to thy fyst,
 “ Thou lockydst them vp where no man wyst,
 “ Tyll in the kynge’s treasoure suche thinges were myst,
 “ &c. Trolle on away!”

The notable Dr. Radcliffe, founder of the library so named, when first he commenced his professional career at Oxford, drew upon himself the inveterate hostility of rival physicians, by an opposition to the plans adopted by them and all their tribe in the treatment of febrile disorders. They adhered much to the exhibition of spiced electuaries, alexipharmics, active cordials, and suffocating chamber-clothing, in such ailments, to provoke a cleansing or absterging of the circulating fluids by excesses of perspiration, which, indeed, was rather hindered than promoted by such stimulus. All the apothecaries sounded an alarm, because the young doctor, adhering to the simple practices of the inestimable Sydenham, made brief work of denouncing and doing away with their complex recipes of innumerable incompatible medicines, which appertained to the injurious mode of treatment. The Dowager Lady Spencer lay dangerously ill at Yarnton Hall. The new practitioner was introduced, to give opinion and aid, which was in direct opposition to the means and opinions inculcated by the superfluous wigs, viz. the family physicians and apothecaries. His judicious treatment produced a cure, and his speedy advancement was occasioned by the patronage of the Spencers. In some biographies this is noticed as the commencement of his amazing notoriety.

CHAPTER VIII.

WOLVERCOTE. — GODSTOW. — THE NUNNERY. — ITS FOUNDATION. —
EXTRACT FROM ONE OF ITS HISTORIANS. — FAIR ROSAMOND. —
DELONY'S BALLAD. — THE TRUE STORY OF ROSAMOND CLIFFORD. —
SENECA'S APOSTROPHE TO SLEEP. — ANCIENT TAVERN OF "THE LAMB
AND FLAG" IN OXFORD. — HADDINGTON, A RESIDENCE OF KING
ETHELRED. — FOREST HILL, THE BIRTHPLACE OF MILTON'S FIRST
WIFE. — SIR WILLIAM JONES'S ELOQUENT DESCRIPTION OF THE
SCENERY. — A POINT IN MILTON'S DOMESTIC HISTORY. — MICKLE THE
TRANSLATOR OF CAMOENS. — VIEW OF THE CHURCH. — PICTURESQUE
VILLAGE OF HALTON. — SQUIRE BISCOE'S DISBELIEF OF DEATH, AND
HIS CONTRIVANCES. — THE VILLAGES OF WHEATLEY AND TETSWORTH.
— ANCIENT SAXON AND NORMAN HUNTING-GROUNDS OF THE BRILL.
— THE VISIONS OF A POST-BOY — TETSWORTH CHURCH. — STORY OF
THE DELLE OF THE VILLAGE.



CHAPTER VIII.



EARING round towards the city of Oxford, and travelling in the south direction from Yarnton, you cross the river at the village of Wolvercote, a very picturesque and simple home, near to the water-side. The sun was shining full strong upon the rippling waves, made manifold by the plunging and wading of a procession of kine, refreshing during the warmth of the summer's day in the bosom of the cooling stream.

The church here is an unpretending edifice, of the late perpendicular style, with a square tower at the west end. The principal objects worthy of attention, leaving architectural details alone, are the handsome carving of the pulpit (which has been shamefully neglected), and a splendid canopied marble monument of the Stuart period (in the north chapel) to the family of Walter. The original painting and gilding are preserved. The effigies of Judge Walter are upon the tomb. He was Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and groom of the chamber to King Charles II. David Walter, whose bones are in the vault, was the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, and colonel of a regiment of horse under King Charles I., and a groom of the bed-chamber to King Charles II. In Wood's time this ancient family resided at Witham. Sir David Walter, he was told, held possession of many writings relative to Godstowe Nunnery. By the side of the pulpit, upon the impost of the chancel arch, is a curious hour-glass stand, used when the duration of the sermon and other services was regulated by that old-fashioned monitor; —“Now, my friends,” said the eccentric Divine recorded in humorous history, “we will take *another glass* together!” and he turned the hour-glass, and tested their patience a sore while longer than the ordinary stint.

Wolvercote was formerly the possession and habitation of Ulgarus or Wolgarus, a Saxon, as in the old deeds it is spelt Wlgaricot, and by this very name it was given to Godstowe Nunnery, 1138. In the principal foundation Charter of Oseney Abbey, the founder gives to that House “*tota decima de Wlgaricote.*” The overflowing waters of the shining Isis and wide meadows extend before this quiet cluster of habitations. Godstowe is upon the road at a little distance as you cross the bridge and travel along the pleasant and

retired highway. The scenery on either side of the next village is very pretty, filled with shadowy nooks, bright waters, and clean homely residences; and here the traveller, on horse or foot, may relax speed, and abandon himself voluptuously to dreams of nature and of dinner-time. Ascending a steep road, we were informed by the gentleman in waiting, who had hobbled before us, and held wide the gate at the second bridge, that "we were now at the sign of the Trout, where, if we liked it, we might have some dinner, and he could keep the horse's head the while." However, the inviting Inn over the stream was filled with a posse of can-clinkers and tobacco-smokers; and the landlord promised a vision of the mutton-chops so frequent during our peregrination, that we the rather imagined no one liked mutton-chops in Oxfordshire, and so they saved them for those who did.

We proceeded. The road is open across some green meadows. The river is wide and gentle upon the eastern boundary; and in the western flat, where the grass grows long and green, and the wind bends the willows to the rivulet, lie the poor ruins of GODSTOWE NUNNERY, breaking all at once upon the view, and pleading, even in extreme decay, for reverence, and a remembrance of its romantic and its religious associations. Who that in the merciful and pitiful fervour of youth has read the olden tale, or conned the ballad strain with musical stress, upon its metrical composition, can forget "Fair Rosamond," unknown to us then for the creature of criminal love,—that since she has been declared to us, in the hard but truthful volume of history, which has slain the favourites of our childhood one by one,—heap upon heap betimes, and rendered our hearts somewhat cold to the representations, which, in the voice of mother or sister, or the kindred school-boy, filled our bosoms with sorrow, and our eyes with wilful tears. The ruins of Godstowe, with the boundary-wall, which is of considerable extent, are hung with ivy, and enclose an orchard and ground attached to the farming-sheds at the lower end. The wall is high, and at one corner, where the rivulet or ditch is cast, and upon the side nearest to the river, there is a considerable gable of old structure, probably of the fifteenth century. There is remaining a perpendicular window of three lights, having an obtusely pointed arch, and there are two square-headed and two round-headed windows in the side wall. This is said to have been the chapter-house. In the Gentleman's Magazine for 1791, page 985, there is an engraving of the ruins as they were taken from an existing sketch; and the paper relative to the subject is accompanied by representations of a double stone coffin, and stone-work dug therefrom. The approach to the Nunnery was through a large gate, with lodging-rooms over it; this led into a spacious court, on the right or south



Godstowe Nunnery.

side of which stood the Nunnery, which was entered by a good portico. On the left or north side of the court was a long range of building, which reached from the gate-house almost to the end of the court. There was a little old chapel standing in the garden, also the remains of a cloister, leading from the tower of the great church through the garden to St. Leonard's Chapel; and in the east window of St. Leonard's Chapel were two stained figures of Margaret of Tewkesbury and Elizabeth Brainton, once abbesses of the place. There was a chapel dedicated to St. Peter, and used for guests, pilgrims, and poor folks, who came there daily; and this stood apart from the house, near to the gate. At the west of this chapel was a lodging for the priests. The Nunnery-house was burnt down in 1645. There was formerly a cross hard by, near to the passage of the river, with this inscription, craving the prayers of pilgrims for the repose of fair Rosamond's sinful soul;—

“ Qui meat huc oret— signum salutis adoret,
 “ Utque tibi detur veniam, Rosamunda precetur.”

The whole now as it remains is a token of devastation,—the devastation of

the commissioners of the Suppression—the devastation of ignorance and wantonness—the devastation of fire and rain and the winds of heaven;—

“ Sacræ olim sedes riguæ convallis in umbra,
“ Et veteri pavidum religione nemus.”

Well might the venerable and learned prelate, who in beautiful Latin verse sketched so true a picture of Godstowe in its mournful state, continue the strain;—“ *The bell by night, awakening the pale sisterhood to the accustomed offices. The chime of the morning ‘Angelus,’ or ‘Ave.’ The torches glimmering afar through the solemn windows, when all were hushed in sleep,*” concluding as we may be permitted to paraphrase the more solemn strains of the original:—

“ The shadow of the evening falls,
On mossy stones and crumbling walls,
And by the porch the simple kine
Pluck the sweet verdure, or recline;
Perhaps the mournful time shall be,
(Now shapeless in futurity,)
When those collegiate towers that rise
So proudly to the glorious skies,
Down to the grave of Time shall bow,
And mourn as Godstowe mourneth now.”

“ Fors et tempus erit cum tu, Rhedycina *, sub astris
“ Edita, cum centum turribus, ipsa cades.”—See *Warton’s Essays*.

Whilst the evening threw the mellow shade upon the festoons of ivy, whose depths of goodly green were strengthened by the cold lichen surface of the line of ruined grey wall, and with the sounds in our ears of merry people going to and fro by the river-side, or the echo of the dismal voice of an invincible songster at the sunlit parlour of the country tavern, we retired into a quiet place, and made a theme for earnest conversation of that interesting scene, whilst my companion sketched the more considerable portion of the remains. I trespassed at the farm entrance, into the enclosure, through the barns adjoining to it. The building, as represented externally, is the more pleasing view, for the interior is a wretched, forlorn pile of ragged perforated bare walls, and yet Rosamond’s bones were there, and her tomb and the inscription. Not a relic is left behind. Absorbed in a thought of commiseration, which made me forgetful of other things, I had soon to bestir myself with energy and some fear, for my meditation and my presence were both displeasing to some cunning, black swine, who, without a grunt of admoni-

* Tradition says that the Greek followers of Brute who settled in our island called the place where Oxford now stands by the name of *Bellositum*. It was afterwards called by the Britons *Rhedychen*, and by the Saxons *Oxenford*; the last two names having the same signification — *Oxenford*, or *Kineford*.

tion, had entered under the barricade, and were hemming me fast into a hollow circle of uplifted snouts. To their sensualised apprehension I might have looked like a vegetable, a giant turnip, or a perpendicular trough. One hazel-eyed rascal deliberately snifted at my hose; another coolly scrutinised the protuberance made by an old "Robin Hood's garland," in the pocket of my surtout behind.

In the latter part of the reign of Henry I., one John de St. John gave a parcel of land, where now these ruins lie, to Editha, an eminent and devout matron, who, at much of her own charge, and some donations or contributions, built the monastery of Godstowe, for Benedictine nuns. In December, 1138, it was solemnly consecrated, and with pompous display, to the honour of the "ever-blessed Virgin Mary" and "St. John the Baptist." Queen Mande, her husband King Stephen, and Eustace their son, were present. Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, was there; also the Bishops of Worcester, Bath, Salisbury, Exeter, and Coutances. Many of the nobility were there, and followed the munificent donations of the royal party by fitting donations. Eustace, the son of Stephen, gave a hundred shillings, until he was of age to give land instead. Alberic, Bishop of Ostia and the Pope's legate, in addition to Stephen's confirmation, gave a release of a year's canonical penance, and the benefits of an "*Indulgence*" of a year (upon the usual pious conditions) to such as should visit the place annually upon the Feast of St. Prisca and of St. John the Baptist. The charter of John Fitz-John expressly stipulates, that the Abbess invariably should be chosen from the congregation of the nuns. King Stephen granted the nuns a fair, to be kept for three days' space at St. John Baptist's tide, and it was afterwards much resorted to. Besides the site of the Abbey, St. John the Founder, as he may be justly termed, gave a mill valued at 4*l.* in Wolvercote, two houses, and some land before the gate of the church in the meadow island, between the branches of the river and a meadow called Lambey, half of which he gave, and the other half Robert de Oiley gave to it. Edith was the wife of Robert de Oiley, and she was buried in Orseney Abbey, clad in a religious habit. Leland notices her tomb on the north side the high altar:—"There lyith an image of Edyth of Stone in the abbite of a Woves* (a nun), holding an hart in her right hand." Bernard de St. Vallery (de St. Vallerico) became possessed of the manor of Wolvercote, and the patronage of Godstowe Nunnery in right of Avoris his wife, daughter of John de St. John: he was lord of the manor of Ambrosden. To ensure peace with the king, who quarrelled with him and vexed him in his estates, he surrendered Wolvercote and

* "Vowess?"

the advowson to Henry II. The donations of Henry II., who forthwith chartered these to the nuns, are recapitulated in a charter of Richard Cœur de Lion. Bernard de St. Vallery, on his journey to the Holy Land in 1191, laid the foundations of a monastery in France, between lands of Picardy and Normandy, and he called it "Godstow Lieu Dieu," says the wise chronicler, or "Locus Dei." Juliana was abbess of Edith's Godstowe in temp. Henry II. and John. Flandrica, or Flandrina, was superior, 1242, in the 7th year of Bishop Grostéte's pontificate: she was deposed, and we find Emma Bloet was appointed to her place, 1248. Catherine Bulkely, or de Beaumaris, was the last abbess, and she was pensioned off at 50*l.* per annum. Other pensions were then allowed to the amount of 28*l.* 5*s.* 5*d.* It was registered at the seizure of religious houses, temp. Hen. VIII., to value 319*l.* 18*s.* 8*d.*, as it was granted by that king to his physician Dr. Owen. In 1829, it was stated to be worth 6,398*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* The Earl of Abingdon is the present owner. There are two seals of this Nunnery in the Augmentation Office. One to a deed 12 Edward I. — the Virgin and St. John holding between them a lamb; the former bears in her left hand a scroll, with the inscription "Eccc Agnus Dei!" In the base, under the word "*Ediva*," is a female kneeling down as in prayer. This is impressed on green wax, and the legend runs in small Roman letters: — "Sigillum scē Marie et scī Johis Bapt. e Godestoens Ecclie." The second seal is attached to the surrender of the monastery. It is on red wax, and of smaller size, St. John holding a lamb under a richly ornamented canopy; in an arch is a female figure crowned, her hands folded, and upon her right arm a crozier. To this is attached a date, upon the act 17th Nov. 13 Henry viij. Upon the remains of the old barn was a mitred head, upon a tablet. This part of Godstowe was pulled down 1720. Some of the cloisters remained in Hearne the antiquary's time, viz. the rude pillars and semicircular arches. The heavy pundit was very fond of the locality, and we have his own testimony that he sometimes strolled there, to indulge in romantic retrospect, and to offer up to the shades of Rosamond and the sisterhood a perfumed whiff of his favourite tobacco-pipe. So far as concerns the Nunnery itself, we shall be content to introduce the following translation from a Latin book, made in the Godstowe library (such as it might have been) in the days of the Abbess Henley, 1644. In the prologue she is commended for her system of education, and her desire to unfold the treasures of Latin books with good English translations. We omit the quaint spelling, which would be a serious hindrance to ordinary readers of the language, as it is formed at the present period; we adhere to the style and mode: — "In Winchester was a lady born of the worthiest blood in this realm, — Dame Edyfe was she

called: her father and mother had no more children, but her only, and for *that* she was more loved and cherished. She was fair and comely, and well was with the King Almighty, and sith was married to a knight—Sir William Launcelie (?). By the grace of God they had three children together, that much were fair and eminent,—one son, and two daughters. The son was abbot of Abberdon. Now of the lady, I shall you say, in which manner and in which wise she lived in God's service. After the decease of her husband often came to her by a vision, that she should go nigh to the city that Oxenford was called, and there she should abide anon, to the time she saw a token of the King Almighty, how and what wise she should build a place to God's service. To Binsey is this lady come, as in a vision to her was sent in her orison: there she dwelt, and much holy life she led; one voice in a night she heard, the which to her said what she should do:—'Edyfe! Edyfe! rise thee up; and without abiding, go you there where the light of heaven alighteth to the earth from the firmament—and there ordain you Mynchyns (nuns) to the service of God, xxiv of the most gentle women that you can find.' And thus was first the Abbey founded. Now sith is this Lady Edyfe to the King Henry the First y' gone, and all to him hath shown, what God in a vision her hath sent. When the King had heard all that she would say, they make and covenant how and what wise they might bring this good deed to an end, and so be they busy in God's service, how they might best build a church in the worship of God, and of our Lady and St. John the Baptist. Now is this Lady Dame Edyfe the abbess in her church, and xxiv ladies with her. Of her two daughters, the eldest, Dame Emma was her name, the prioress of this house; and Dame Avisia, or Avis, the second daughter, was the second prioress, as long as she lived. Now, be they to God commended, that was of the 'Mother' born. *He* that for us sinners would vouchsafe to die, *He* us grant, if him it pleaseth, to his joy to come! Amen."

And now of the oft told history of Fair Rosamond;—

Eleanour, the daughter and heiress of William Duke of Guienne and Count of Poietou, was repudiated by her husband Louis the Seventh, King of France, after his return from the Holy Land, whither she had accompanied him. The affection of her spouse was entirely lost, by reason of her gallantries. With the divorce her dowry was restored to her, and it was a wealthy one—gold and rich provinces. Henry the Second, then Count of Anjou, and in his nineteenth year, made successful suit to her, lured by her fortune, and he married her six weeks after her separation from her first husband. Henry, the victim of an unequal mate, felt the jealous nature of her vigilant thrall; and as the mother of his children took part in their contentions with

the sire, he hated her; so much so, that, attempting to escape over to them entirely, in male attire, for a disguise, she was captured, and confined in hard quarters, until the death of Henry, in 1189. He in his lifetime had attached himself fervently to a paragon of beauty, Rosamond, the daughter of Walter, Lord Clifford, and he would not that ever she should be parted from him.

She was a lovely girl in the flower of youth when she became the royal concubine: how she was detested by Queen Eleanour, an injured wife only can declare; and for the daughter of the Duke of Guienne we can assert, that she was no exception to our opinion that the hot blood which can enkindle connubial jealousy, is the mad whirlpool of jealous frenzy soonest when suspicion even breathes upon its fevered current. By "Fair Rosamond" (the two words amalgamate involuntarily) the king had sons,—William Longue-espé, Earl of Salisbury, and Geoffery, the Bishop of Lincoln, as afterwards they lived to be. The mistress remained at Woodstock Palace, guarded in a series of wonderfully contrived chambers—a mazy bower, to protect her from the intrusions and insults of the Queen, who poured forth the vials of wrath upon the woman whom the world acknowledged, in spite of her beseeching splendour of form, to have been the evil most hard upon her, by her husband's malignity.

The labyrinth had an entrance known only to few. It was a succession of arches and walls of brick and stone. However, exercise gave occasion to departure sometimes from the retirement, and then the lioness was near, and full of contention. The tender girl, deprived almost of heaven's light, absent from her lover, and annoyed with treacheries and cruel lies of her attendants and the queen Eleanour, pined away and died. The story of her death by poison is a clear fiction: she died a natural death soon after she was immured in the "bower," which then signified any chamber of pleasure, or delightful arrangement of apartments. Her parents buried her before the High Altar at Godstowe. Her disconsolate lord and royal lover lavished his treasure upon her tomb.

Ever since then her name has been accompanied with words of pity; and poor Jane Shore and Fair Rosamond have been most amiable sinners in the estimation of the young and inconsiderate, and remain in this predicament at the present day. But for the traditionary "Bowl and Dagger" the idea of the damsel would have evaporated. Who can forget the pitiful ballad?



Fair Rosamond.

WHEN as King Henry rulde this land,
The second of that name,
Besides the queen he dearly lovde,
A faire and comely dame.

Most peerlesse was her beautye founde,
Her favour, and her face ;
A sweeter creature in this worlde
Did never prince embrace.

Her crisped lockes like threads of golde
Appeard to each mans sight ;
Her sparkling eyes, like Orient pearles,
Did cast a heavenly light.

The blood within her chrystal cheekes
 Did such a colour drive,
 As though the lillye and the rose
 For mastership did strive.



Yea Rosamond, fair Rosamond,
 Her name was called so,
 To whom our queene, dame Elinor,
 Was known a deadly foe.

The king, therefore, for her defence,
 Against the furious queene,
 At Woodstocke builded such a bower,
 The like was never seene.

Most curiously that bower was built
 Of stone and timber strong,
 An hundred and fifty doors
 Did to this bower belong :

And they so cunninglye contriv'd,
 With turnings round about,
 That none but with a clue of thread
 Could enter in or out.

And for his love and ladyes sake,
 That was so faire and brighte,
 The keeping of this bower he gave
 Unto a valiant knighte.

But fortune, that doth often frowne
 Where she before did smile,
 The kinges delighte, the ladyes joy,
 Full soon shee did beguile :

For why, the kinges ungracious sonne,
 Whom he did high advance,
 Against his father raised warres
 Within the realme of France.

But yet before our comelye king
 The English land forsooke,
 Of Rosamond, his ladye faire,
 His farewell thus he tooke :

‘ My Rosamond, my only Rose,
 That pleasest best mine eye :
 The fairest flower in all the worlde
 To feed my fantasie :

The flower of mine affected heart,
 Whose sweetness doth excelle ;
 My royal Rose, a thousand times,
 I bid thee nowe farewellle !

For I must leave my fairest flower,
 My sweetest Rose, a space,
 And cross the seas to famous France,
 Proud rebelles to abase.

But yet, my Rose, be sure thou shalt
 My coming shortly see,
 And in my heart, when hence I am,
 Ile beare my Rose with mee.'

When Rosamond, that ladye brighte,
 Did heare the kinge saye soe,
 The sorrowe of her grieved heart
 Her outward looks did showe ;

And from her cleare and crystall eyes
 The teares gusht out apace,
 Which like the silver-pearled dewe
 Ranne downe her comely face.

Her lippes erst like the corall redde,
 Did waxe both wan and pale,
 And for the sorrowe she conceivde
 Her vitall spirits faile ;

And falling down all in a swoone
 Before King Henryes face,
 Full oft he in his princelye armes
 Her body did embrace ;

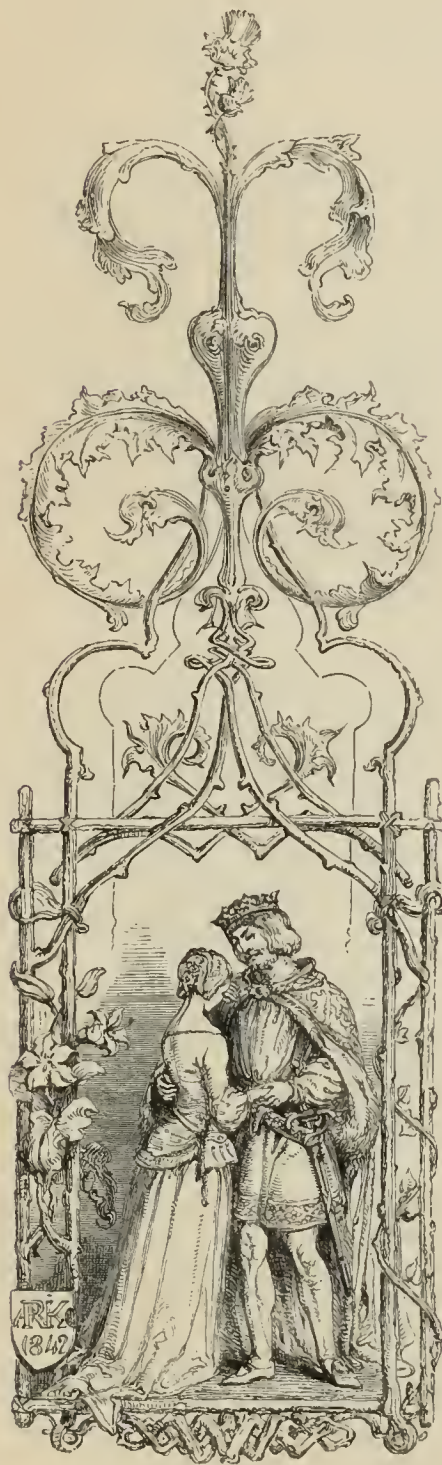
And twentye times, with watery eyes,
 He kist her tender cheeke,
 Until he had revivde againe
 Her senses milde and meeke.

' Why grieves my Rose, my sweetest Rose ?'
 The king did often say.
 ' Because,' quoth shee, ' to bloodye warres
 My lord must pass awaye.

But sith your grace in forrayne coastes,
 Amonge your foes unkinde
 Must goe to hazarde life and limbe,
 Why should I staye behinde ?

Nay, rather let me, like a page,
 Your sworde and target beare,
 That on my breast the blowes may lighte,
 Which would offend you there.

Or lett mee, in your royal tent,
 Prepare your bed at nighte,
 And with sweete baths refresh your grace,
 At your returne from fighte.



So I your presence may enjoye
 No toil I will refuse ;
 But wanting you, my life is death :
 Nay, death Ile rather choose.'

' Content thyself, my dearest love ;
 Thy rest at home shall bee
 In Englandes sweet and pleasant isle ;
 For travell fits not thee.

Faire ladies brooke not bloodye warres ;
 Sweet peace their pleasures breede,
 The nourisher of hearts content,
 Which fancy first did feede.

My Rose shall rest in Woodstocke bower,
 With musickes sweete delight ;
 Whilst I, amonge the piercing pikes,
 Against my foes do fighte.

My Rose in robes of pearle and golde,
 With diamonds richly dight ;
 Shall dance the galliards of my love,
 Whilst I my foes do fighte.

And you, Sir Thomas, whom I truste
 To bee my love's defence ;
 Be careful of my gallant Rose
 When I am parted hence.'

And therewithall he fetcht a sigh,
 As though his heart would breake :
 And Rosamond, for inward griefe,
 Not one plaine worde could speake.

And at their parting well they mighte
 In heart be grieved sore :
 After that daye faire Rosamond
 The king did see no more.

For when his grace had passed the seas,
 And into France was gone ;
 With envious heart, Queene Elinor,
 To Woodstocke came anone.

And forth she calls the trustye knighte
 Which kept this curious bower ;
 Who with his clue of twined thread,
 Came from the famous flower.

And when that they had wounded him,
 The queene his thread did gette,
 And went where Lady Rosamond
 Was like an anell sette.



And when the queene with stedfast eye
Beheld her heavenlye face,
She was amazed in her minde
At her exceeding grace.

'Cast off from thee thy robes,' she said,
'That riche and costlye bee ;
And drinke thou up this deadlye draught,
Which I have brought to thee.'

But presentlye upon her knees
Sweet Rosamond did falle ;
And pardon of the queene she crav'd
For her offences all.

'Take pittie on my youthfull yeares,'
Fair Rosamond did crye ;
'And lett mee not with poison stronge
Enforced bee to dye.

I will renounce my sinfull life,
And in some cloyster bide ;
Or else be banisht, if you please,
To range the world soe wide ;

And for the fault that I have done,
Though I was forc'd theretoe,
Preserve my life, and punish mee
As you thinke good to doe.'

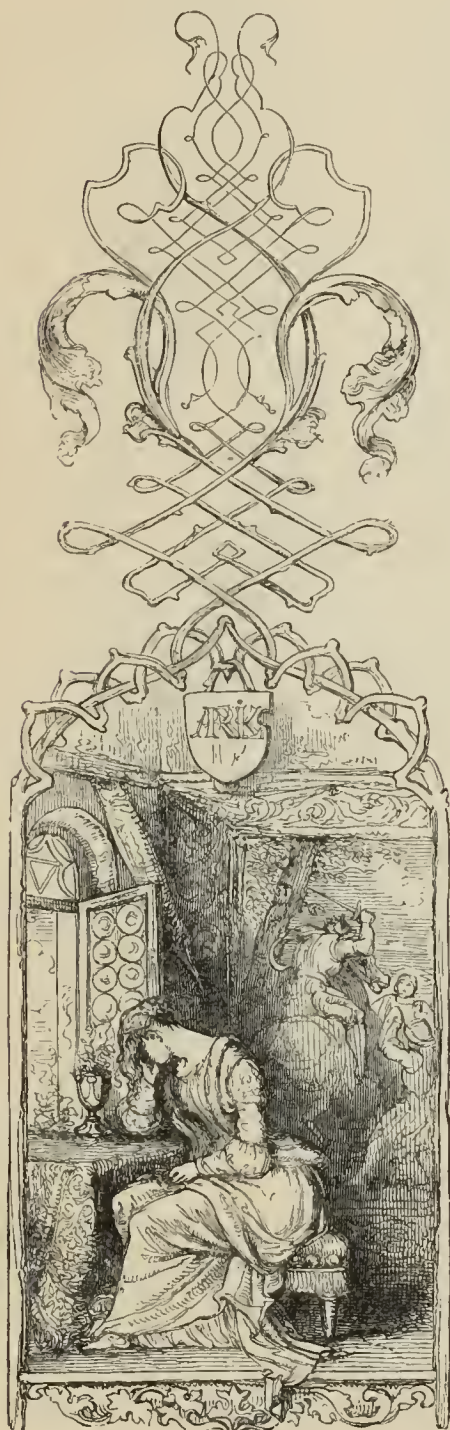
And with these words, her lillie handes
She wrunge full often there ;
And downe along her comelye face
Did trickle many a teare.

But nothing could this furious queene
Therewith appeased bee ;
The cup of deadyle poyson stronge,
As she knelt on her knee,

Shee gave the comelye dame to drinke ;
Who tooke it in her hand,
And from her bended knee arose,
And on her feet did stand :

And casting up her eyes to heaven,
Shee did for mercye calle ;
And drinking up the poyson stronge,
Her life she lost withalle.

And when that death through everye limbe
Had showde his greatest spite,
Her chieffest foes did there confesse
Shee was a glorious wight.



Her body then they did entomb,
 When life was fled away,
 At Godstowe, neere to Oxford towne,
 As may be seene this day.

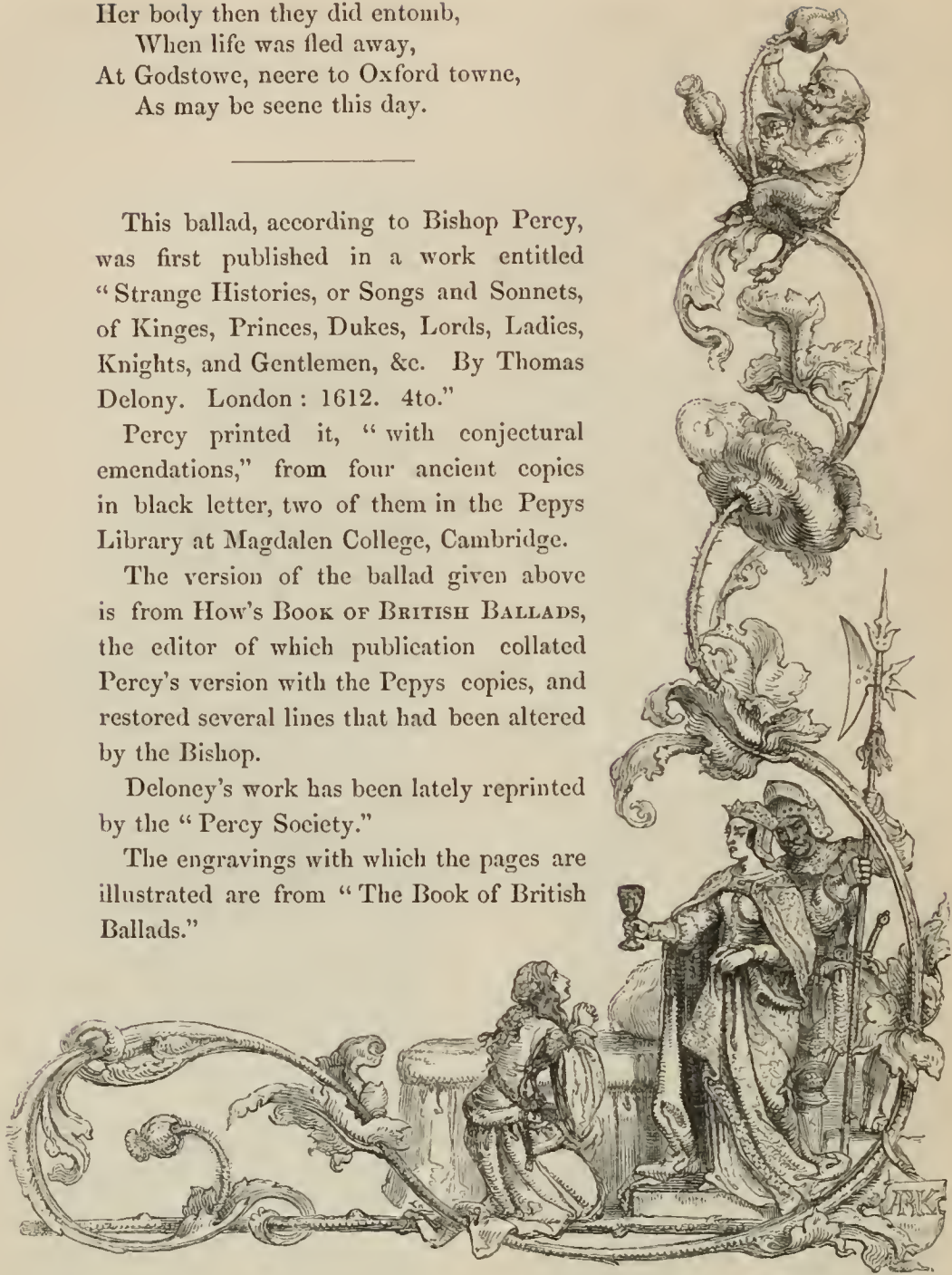
This ballad, according to Bishop Percy, was first published in a work entitled "Strange Histories, or Songs and Sonnets, of Kinges, Princes, Dukes, Lords, Ladies, Knights, and Gentlemen, &c. By Thomas Delony. London: 1612. 4to."

Percy printed it, "with conjectural emendations," from four ancient copies in black letter, two of them in the Pepys Library at Magdalen College, Cambridge.

The version of the ballad given above is from How's *BOOK OF BRITISH BALLADS*, the editor of which publication collated Percy's version with the Pepys copies, and restored several lines that had been altered by the Bishop.

Deloney's work has been lately reprinted by the "Percy Society."

The engravings with which the pages are illustrated are from "The Book of British Ballads."



The description of her beauty takes you completely beyond your judgment, and you award the pair, king and mistress, without demur, all the approbation you could afford to a nice snug married couple, exemplary in their reciprocal affections. If you can get through the scene which describes the parting between "the Rose" and the king, upon his retiring to "abase" the French rebels: her *tears*, her *pale lips*, the *swoon*, and the *twenty kisses*;—if you can do so without a sigh, you deserve to be laid upon the table of the

Geological Society at the very next meeting as a bifurcated petrification and a singular stony formation, in human shape complete. When the king is absent the clue to the bower is discovered, and the queen appears before her rival. How grandly this is hit off in the coloured prints which adorn the ballad in its improved form upon the literary walls of a rustic habitation.

All this is illustrated admirably. A woman (like a brigand in female drapery) has a two-quart chalice in one hand and a Spanish stiletto in the other. The determination is evinced by a pair of starting eyes and an agitated crown, which appears likely to fall with tremor of excitement, and the bare arms (worthy of the "strong man" at Astleys) show that strength—physical strength—aids determination. Rosamond kneels all in flowing attire, a picture of agony, done in red lead and gamboge, cheap at a penny. Such are the Eleanour and Rosamond of our people's affection. We leave them to their affections, which, perhaps with ordinary care, may wear out Westminster Abbey, and endure when Nelson lies mutilated in his ugly cable, and unnoticed amongst the fern and thistles of Trafalgar Square.

"I do not like this style of observation," quoth my companion: "we have no such caricatures of history within sight at the present. Our respect at the least is due to an unfortunate lady, the more so because we witness the scene where profane hands once shattered her solitary tomb, and dispersed her bones, as they had been the leavings of bear or wolf, found in a savage lair."

"I thought," said I, "you were tired of the place; your cheek looked wan, and you had an eye betimes to yonder fair city."

"If you would please me," said my friend of the pencil, depositing the sketch of the ruin in the hollow of his hat, and gazing upon it like Macready at the "grave-digger" in the hole in the middle of the stage; talk seriously, and say something more about the Lady Rosamond, and of this ancient depository of her remains."

Shuffling to a weedy stone, we looked for an instant at our squire of the vehicle. He was asleep upon the gig step, and the horse would have slumbered also, but for the flies, and for need of provender. We summoned the youth to bear a hard biscuit from our trusty scrip, and bade him lead the quadruped over the turf, to renew the circulation in his trembling frame.

Evening came apace: the ground was marshy, and the water wind blew cool over the dull meadow land; twilight bade haste to friendly gossip and elucidation.

Rosamond Clifford was born at Clifford Castle, in Herefordshire, the baronial residence of the Lords de Clifford, where some of the ruins remain upon the banks of the river Wye. Her father had been a great benefactor

to Godstowe Priory, and she was sent there at an early age to receive her education. The nuns, during the innocent part of her life, loved her fondly (as we read in Hearne's Notes to William of Newborough), and were delighted with her eloquent conversation, so much were her abilities correspondent to the beauty of her outward mould. She is said to have been "a master-piece of nature; the complete beauty of the age."

It is the old opinions that sisters in the monastic state are dull and melancholy. There are dull and melancholy people at the Opera House, and wise and merry people who never leave the counting-house; but we know by proof the nuns of Godstowe were not under painful and sad restrictions, nor were they hindered from any kind of proper recreation. Their kind rule over the general household, and especially of the children entrusted to them gave satisfaction, we read, to their parents and kindred. Godstowe wanted nothing requisite for pleasure; avenues of verdure, brooks, orchards, bowery recesses, and vistas of uncommon beauty; and, since sameness is tiresome, they were allowed to solace themselves once a year, under particular regulations, at the three days fair of Godstowe; and, moreover, to go upon walks and places of recreation to the hamlet of Medley, which is between their house and the city of Oxford. It belonged to Godstowe; for William de Witham, who had three daughters at school there, gave it to the nunnery.

Rosamond was intimate with this family; they were people of note and distinction. Some of them were her dear schoolfellows. Now when the nuns so cheerfully rambled in modest train to this home of theirs by the river side, there was made a care that no disturbance should be offered to them, because there was a great concourse of persons that came from Oxford and other places to enjoy like diversions at Medley, which was vastly pleasant in its situation, and a place of summer amusement even in the year 1620: hear the love song of Geo. Withers:—

" In summer time to Medley,
My love and I would go,
The boatman there stood ready
My love and I to rowe."

The sisters had a parlour and a room for devotion there, in case of foul weather; and, besides, there was an oratory, or field-church, a pretty chapel in a meadow near to this, at Binsey; and it was erected by the chaste St. Frideswide, of whose rare chastity you must read in the acts of her life. St. Margaret's Well was on the west side of the chapel, in the place called Thornbury, said to have been caused when the saint prayed to Margaret to assist her in her mortal affliction.

Rosamond never knew happier days! We fancy we see her now, in the emerald turf, gathering the wild flowers, or leaning upon the shoulder of some kind friend near, and pouring forth her fountain of silvery eloquence and startling wit and fervour. Our imagination, in spite of her portrait as preserved (if we may believe the thing), presents her to us as a girl somewhat tall for her youth, and of graceful figure, her hands and feet delicate in proportion. Her face oval, and positively resplendent, with mingling coral and ivory. Her hair luxuriant, and of the lightest brown, silken, and soft exceedingly. Her type, but not the duplicate, is often seen. It exists in that loveliness and early gush of beauty, combined with extreme general sensibility, to which there is a crisis at that period of life when the corporal growth demands an aid refused by the exorbitant spirit for its further advances of vitality and perfection. The soul, like that celestial flocculence of light, which hovers in thunder storms over the slender point of the javelin of the sentinel, avoids the material which is its attraction: to such as these excess of rapture, and the torture of chagrin, are alike fatal. The spirit, to attain its bias, must be relieved from bands of mortality.

The wrath of Eleanour to gentle Rosamond was more terrible than venom, or the sword. She died consumptive, probably, or from the effects of low fever, the consequence of the exhaustion succeeding to intense agony of mind. We will not meddle with the mischief she occasioned: she loved the highest in the land, who, unhappy and deprived, in fact, of his wedded spouse by family disagreement, loved *her* beyond every thing. In that delirium so acceptable to a creature of such sensibility, she lived forgetful of the hour of reckoning. We do not give way to a vague belief that she repented, and became a nun at Godstowe.

“ She told one of her companions in her penitence, says a tradition, “ that a certain tree should be turned to stone when she (by God’s grace and the relief from a temporary suffering through pious prayers on earth) should become a saint in heaven.”

The tale of the “ nut tree,” so well known, is also a ridiculous figment. She died, as we have repeated, soon after she was confined for security in her “ bower,” at Woodstock. Many are the records of the unfortunate lady. Robert of Gloucester, speaking of Henry II., says thus:—

“ He hulde vnder the Quene, Rosemounde y’ wis,
That so vair a woman was, and at Godestowe i’ bured is.

This speaks both of her beauty and her burial; joy and darkness. He continues elsewhere:—

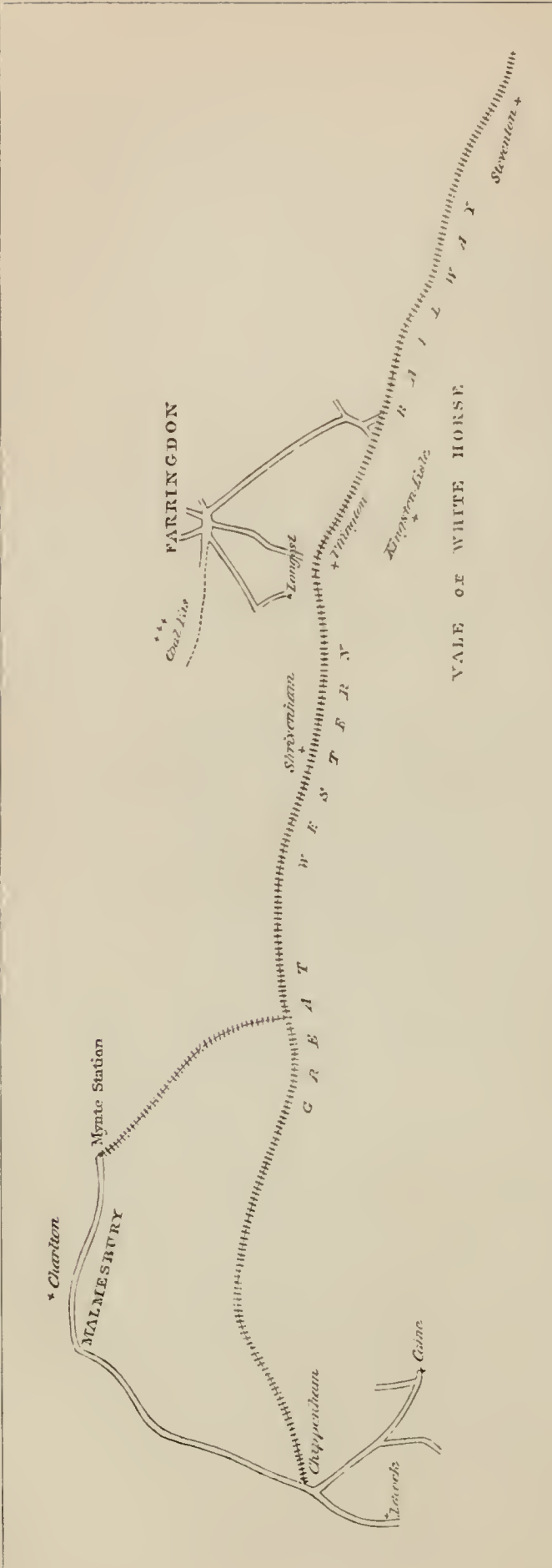
“ The unkyndhede of his done, to grete sorrow him brought
 And is wryte — spousebreche (infidelity) a' yeuste the larne he wroughte,
 And held under his wife — Rosamounde — i' wys
 The fairest woman, that me wist — that i' buried is
 In the abbey of nonnes (by side Oxenforde)
 That Godstowe y'cleped is, that wyde springeth of worde
 'Bowres' had the Rosamounde, about in Engelonde.
 Which thys kynge for her sake made ich' understonde.”

Reynulph of Chester, in his “ Polychromion,” omits the poison; but says, “ The quene coulde not abide the sayde damosell, and therefore would she have done her displeasure, if she myghte have come by her; and it is also written of some, that at laste the quene, by a clewe or bothome of thred broughte unto her, founde the way and came unto her, and she lived not long after, but she dyed, and was buried at Godestowe besyde Oxenford.” I should think the epitaph upon her tomb, from its reflection upon her improper conduct, was not originally placed there, or until some years after her departure: —

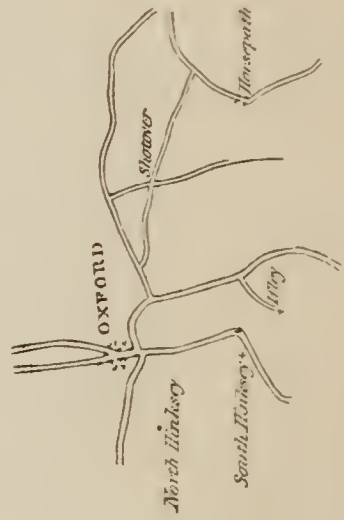
“ *Hic jacet in tumba, Rosa mundi, non rosa munda
 Non redolet, sed olet, quae redolere solet.*”

“ The rose of the world, but not the clean flowre,
 Is now here graven, to whom beauty was lent.
 In this grave full darke nowe is her bowre,
 That by her life was sweet and redolent:
 But now that she is from this life blent,
 Though shee were sweete, now foully doth she stinke.
 A mirrour good for all men that on her thinke.”

After the nunnery was dissolved, and her tomb came to be broken to pieces by those in whom there was nurturing the after-fruit of puritanism, we learn that there were upon the cover “ interchangeable weavings (fretwork), drawn out and decked with roses red,” &c.: to this probably the two first lines of the vernacular allude by the word “ graven.” When this tomb was destroyed, it lay in the Chapter-house, under that wall upon which to a late period the tablet and inscription remained; and this was the cause of its removal there from its original place in the priory sanctuary (Teste Roger. Hovedon): — “ Anno Domini MCXCj. Hugh Grostete (or Greathead) Bishop of Lincoln, making his visitation to the religious houses in his diocese (he was an exemplary honest disciplinarian) came to the abbey of holy persons at Godestow, which is between Oxford and Woodstock: and when he entered their church there that he might pray, he perceived a tomb in the middle of the choir before the altar, veiled with silk, and surrounded with lamps and tapers: and inquiring ‘ Whose tomb was this?’ answer was made to him, ‘ that it was the tomb of Rosamond Clifford, formerly the sweetheart of



VALE OF WHITE HORSE.



Henry king of England, the son of Queen Maud; and that *he*, for love of her, had done much good to the church.'” The bishop did not allow for the prevailing feeling, that the king had a particular affection for the place as well as for the lady, he and her parents having been such liberal benefactors thereunto. The abbess and nuns had permitted her body to be laid in such a sacred part of the church, because a handsome gratuity had been left upon that consideration. Thus continues Hovedon: — “The bishop answered, ‘Take her hence! she was an impure woman! bury her out of the church with the rest, lest the Christian religion should be defiled and polluted; and that her example may shock other women, and that they may guard themselves from unlawful and adulterous intercourse and associations:’” and as he said, so it was done immediately. Leland says, in his Itinerary, temp. Henry VIII., “Rosamunde’s tombe at Godstowe was taken up o’ late: it is a stone with this inscription, ‘Tumba Rosamundæ.’ Her bones were inclosed in lede; withyn that the bones were closed in leather: when it was opened, there was a very sweete smell came oute of it.” The grave was then despoiled: the bones were scattered, God knows where! and it is of little consequence now. Her memory is stronger than her unpitied bones. Her “labyrinth” is destroyed.

Old Doctor Stukely says, in his “Itinerarium Curiosum,” iter. ii. pp. 43, 44., “Leaving this famous repository of learning (Oxford), we saw on our left hand, on the other side of the river, the last ruins of Godstow Nunnery, placed among the sweet meadows. Here Fair Rosamond, the beloved mistress of Henry II., had a tomb remarkably fine: but before the Dissolution, scarce could her ashes rest, whose beauty was thought guilty even after death. At Woodstock we saw part of the Old Palace, and her famous labyrinth which is since destroyed: her bathing-place or well is left — a quadrangular receptacle of most pure water, immediately flowing from a little spring under the hill, and overshadowed with trees.” This was written in 1724. The spring remains; the site of the palace is denoted by two well-grown sycamore trees, just within the New Park Gate.

Reynulph of Chester said, that “Rosamond had a little coffer scarcely two feet long, marvellously artificially wrought, which was to be seen at Godstowe, wherein giants seemed to fight, beasts to startle and stir, and fowls to fly in the air, and fishes to swim in the water without any manner of moving or help.” What a subject of curiosity would that “little coffer” be now, with its queer automata and its elaborate carved work! Perhaps it was a present from her lover, which, as a great and wonderful gift, she bequeathed in death to the abbess of her old school remembrances: and how many words

of sympathy were uttered over it, when it was brought forth into the dim parlour for the inspection of the simple novices, who knew half of her history, and that she was dead and gone for ever! May *He* who permitted his holy feet to be entwined with the luxuriant locks of the penitent Magdalen, measure her wilful heart against the ponderous scale of his own infinite mercy; and may she rest in peace!

On returning to our vehicle, and tendering the lubberly urchin who still mumbled his biscuit the compensation as agreed upon, he pointed, with hard tears, to his bleeding foot, manifest through a lacerated shoe; and bitterly he complained that the horse had lamed him with its hoof, "he didn't know fur how lang." At first sight of the blood, we half cursed the animal, and prepared to dive for a supplementary shilling; but the transition of joy was far too sudden, when he beheld the effect of his sad narration. Suspicion throttled the purse strings. Upon a second inspection it was evident that his foot, beneath the slashed shoe-leather, was apparelled after the contrivance of some educated village doctress.

"Why, you rascal! you have had a sore foot for a long while!"

"Yes zur!" he answered, without confusion; "the doctur have pricked him twice or three dimes, and he wooant gather fur nuthink!"

Upon a threat of the application of the horsewhip over his shrugged shoulders, he only replied, "I be zure your hoss have made him wuss; I do zay zo na-ow!" and as we drove to the distance, he actually grinned with roguery, and made signs of mockery which would have done honour to a Philadelphian. From cooks, and guides, and parish clerks, old and young, heaven defend us and all poor travellers!

There are but a few minutes between you and Witham as you regain the Oxford road; and we pulled up in that quiet village to seek shelter, rest, and food for man and beast. We intended also to visit the Church, and to examine the peculiarities of the place. The church and churchyard were fast barricadoed; the locality was dull and uninteresting; and the good woman who presided over Mr. Barret's larder, was all too languid to attempt our accommodation. "She had nothing," she said, "and nothing could she get. She didn't expect nobody. It was *Commemoration Day* in Oxford, and she thought every body was there beside herself." Barret was formerly a favourite gamekeeper at Witham Abbey; and, ten years ago, a keener fellow never faced the red fox in the twilight of a hazy morning. In pursuit of ordinary occupation, he was a rude, humorous, cautious, swing-along kind of a ranger, who never smelt the breeze or eyed a rain-cloud without a professional aphorism, or thrashed a juvenile hound without telling you some light

anecdote to the praise of the rascal's good ability. In active duties, and as the guide and governor of the battue, or woodland scrutiny, or deed of stealth and destruction, he was altogether a silent, determined, and invaluable aid and authority, such an one as few could equal; and many regarded him as the oracle of his kind. He has retired from the service, old, infirm, and the wreck of all that he used to be; and he now affixes his honoured name to the principal tavern in the village. Our horse refreshed there, and we loosened him awhile from the slavery of his tackle: the decrepid host made a good feeble attempt to groom him to our satisfaction. We left him hard at the work, and retired to his lofty lonesome parlour; for we were tired with the sufficiency of the day's employment. The pheasants and partridges, which stared under the glazed coverings which protected them from dust and moisture, were the only remembrances of the days of glory left behind; and they too bore as much relation to the live things of natural history, in their stunted stuffing, as did the attenuated, wrinkled, dim-eyed gamekeeper, encased in voluminous folds of barragon and corduroy, to the famous friend of his lordship in the hour of his pride. Were gamekeepers immortal, the fox would forsake its cunning and the hare its instinctive craft: they would have merely to march up to the hall of the proprietor, and submit to a reasonable decimation.

“The old fellow's portrait you see there,” said my companion, looking earnestly at a faint black-lead likeness of a stalwart Mr. Barret, with his dog and fowling-piece, “was one of my earliest doings; and he seems to treasure it now. Many years since, I was visiting near, and often accompanied the man upon his early rounds. Over the hospitable board he spread for my refreshment then, that rugged performance was executed; and there perhaps it will remain, when the original is in the grave. Some contemporary may say to the evening company, ‘*I once did hear him zay as a boo-oy did it, as was down o' these parts:*’ but for painfully reminding myself of many circumstances which would ruffle the stagnant waters of his soul, I would cause him now to remember me. It is very painful to see age troubling itself with hurried half remembrances of youth upon such an acknowledgement.”

In a lower parlour of smaller dimensions, garnished with the usual rustic curiosities — wax frights in grottoes, &c. — we noticed a caricature of the period, or rather a detestable representation of a reality, — “Governor Wall superintending the flogging of Sergeant Benjamin Armstrong, attended by Lieutenants Paul, Poplett, and other functionaries.” The execution of the meek Louis XVI. occupied another picture frame: a guillotine; a short fat

man in his shirt and breeches; and Mr. Edgeworth as usual, and this assertion in rhyme: —

“ When on the scaffold he did say,
Wringing his hands, with upcast eyes,
‘ Receive my soul, oh God! I pray;
And oh! forgive my enemies!’ ”

Finding that sufficient accommodation could only be procured at Oxford, so soon as the old gamekeeper, with palsied hands, had harnessed the fatigued beast to the vehicle, we wished him a merry good-morrow, and went our ways, soon to be welcomed by cheerful friends, who gave us hearty gratulation; and some hours after curfew we went each to appointed hostelry, to slumber the brief night away, as soundly as children tired with rejoicing at a summer’s day’s festival. What orgies, of the tyrant’s ill provision, or what usual fears had Seneca sustained, when he apostrophized with earnest heart the influence of the hour of slumbering; — “ Oh Sleep! kind restorative to wearied humanity, and boon of tranquillity to the wounded spirit,—better portion of our earthly existence,—swift offspring of the Divine Astrea, and languid kinsman of death, mingling together delusion and scintillations of veracity;—you roam, and, as in the mirror, you declare to us the circumstance of futurity, with certain, and oftentimes with sad communication!—Paternal guardian of every thing—entrance to life—solace of light—faithful comrade of the solemn night;—not with less tender care you smile upon the lacerated bondsman, than upon the luxury of the pale emperor; to one—to all—a willing messenger: with calm diffusion of your presence, lull the weary pain of aching limbs, and make such gradual custom to poor mortals, of a similitude fearful to their natural soul, that welcoming your veiled resemblance, by degrees they even learn to die!”

We for our own part, all alone, at the very ancient tavern of the *Lamb and Flag*, in the good quarter of St. Giles, awoke at early hour, and yawning to the sunlight, which announced itself through the apertures of a slovenly window-blind, drew in a healthful draught of air, which soon decomposed the lingering propensities to sleep. At a good morning-hour of the same day we were provided, by one of the judicious stable-keepers with which the learned city abounds, with a promising *trap* and a competent animal, and proceeded, after stowing the usual complement of maps, books, and references, upon a further stage of “the Wanderings.” Our destination was to the east and to the south-east of the point of departure, in the centre of the town.

Our route lay through Headington, and the stone-quarries there abounding, to Holton Church and to Forest Hill. The steep road which you take

to the left, after crossing the Magdalen Bridge over the river Cherwell, leads you to Headington. Before leaving the boundary of St. Clement's parish, we should observe, that formerly there were three Halls, founded for academical purposes, in this parish. These were singularly enough denominated — *Loose, Cabbage, and Caterpillar Halls*. The former was named from a celebrated ancient matron, mistress of a small ale-house which stood at the end of Harpsichord Row, near the turning of the road which leads to Marston upon the left. Tradition says she was the last woman in all England that wore a ruff; and a very rare portraiture of the dame represents her as wearing, with the steeple hat, that more remarkable relic of former modes. *Cabbage Hall* was founded by a tailor! *Caterpillar Hall* was so termed, because, as the successful rival of Cabbage Hall, it drew many students from that society, and was therefore described in cant parlance as having *devoured "the Cabbage."*

Haddington is a rural village, situated about two miles eastward of Oxford. This was in King Ethelred's time one of the monarch's royal residences. Some remains of the ancient walls and a gateway of the king's residence were in existence till within the last sixty years. There is still a place called the "Court Close" upon the site of the edifice. Just beyond the turnpike gate, upon a bleak and rude extent of ground, is the Union Workhouse, fashioned with gigantic dimensions upon the usual prison-like scheme of the modern Poor Law Commissioners. This painful mansion holds upwards of two hundred and fifty persons. The Union itself comprehends 22 parishes, with an area of despotism of 42 square miles. We find, by a statistical paper published in 1831, that this same space was populated by 12,904 souls. Many of the buildings in Oxford, raised with the stone of this district, give lamentable proofs of premature decay; the calcareous material rapidly breaking up, to the destruction of architectural ornament. The church is dedicated to St. Andrew; and in the church-yard is a handsome cross, decorated with Gothic traceries. About half a mile further upon the road, where the scenery all at once becomes rural and interesting, and the hedges are wide and green, and small streams purl through the veil of lowly herbage, we turned off at an angle into a narrower road, which brought us at once in view of the village of Forest Hill, and its picturesque and varied outskirts. It is situated upon a charming eminence. The religious institution here was formerly a cell belonging to the abbot of Oseney. It is most prominent now in historical record, from the circumstance of our celestial bard, John Milton, having married his first wife from this place. The register of her baptism is yet preserved for curious inspection, as fol-

lows:— “ Maria Powell, the daughter of Richard Powell, baptized the 28th day of January, 1625.” We confess ourselves all too feeble to describe the effects of the beautiful summer scenery, so connected at this time with a locality and a name worthy of purer note. “ I went,” says the learned Sir William Jones in one of his early letters to Lady Spencer, dated Sept. 7. 1769, “ in company with a friend, to visit a place where Milton spent some part of his life, and where, in all probability, he composed several of his earliest productions. It is a small village, situated on a pleasant hill, about three miles from Oxford, and called Forest Hill, because it formerly lay contiguous to a forest, which has since been cut down. The Poet chose this place of retirement after his first marriage, and he describes the beauties of his retreat in that fine passage of ‘ L’Allegro ’:—

‘ Sometimes walking, not unseen,
 By hedge-row elms, or hillocks green,
 * * * * *
 While the ploughman, near at hand,
 Whistles o’er the furrow’d land;
 And the milk-maid singeth blithe,
 And the mower wets his scythe;
 And every shepherd tells his tale,
 Under the hawthorn in the dale.
 Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
 Whilst the landscape round it measures;—
 Russets, lawns, and fallows grey,
 Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
 Mountains, on whose barren breast
 The lab’ring clouds do often rest;
 Meadows, trim with daisies pied,
 Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
 Tower and battlements it sees,
 Bosom’d high in tufted trees.
 * * * * *
 Hard by a cottage chimney smokes,
 From betwixt two aged oaks,’ &c.

“ It was neither the proper season of the year nor time of the day to hear all the rural sounds, and see all the objects, mentioned in this description; but by a pleasing concurrence of circumstances, we were saluted on our approach to the village with the music of the mower and his scythe, we saw the ploughman intent upon his labour, and the milk-maid returning from her country employment. As we ascended the hill, the variety of beautiful objects, the agreeable stillness and natural simplicity of the scene gave us the highest pleasure. We at length reached the spot whence Milton undoubtedly took most of his images,—it is on the top of the hill, from which there is a most extensive prospect on all sides; the distant mountains, that seemed to sup-

port the clouds; the villages and turrets partly shaded with trees of the finest verdure, and partly raised above the groves that surrounded them; the dark plains and meadows of a greyish colour, where the sheep were feeding at large; in short, the view of the streams and rivers convinced us that there was not a single useless or idle word in the above description, but that it was a most exact and lively representation of nature. Thus will this fine passage, which has always been admired for its elegance, receive an additional beauty from its exactness.

“ After we had walked with a kind of poetical enthusiasm over this enchanted ground, we returned to the village. The Poet’s house was close to the church; the greatest part of it has been pulled down, and what remains belongs to an adjacent farm. I am informed, that several papers in Milton’s own hand were found by the gentleman who was last in possession of the estates. The tradition of his having lived there is still current amongst the villagers; one of them showed us a ruinous wall that made part of his chamber; and I was much pleased with another, who had forgotten the name of Milton, but recollected him under the title of “*The Poet*.” It must not be omitted, that the groves near this village are famous for nightingales, which are so elegantly described in the “*Penseroso*.” Most of the cottage windows are overgrown with sweetbriars, vines, and honeysuckles; and that Milton’s habitation had the same rustic ornament, we may conclude from the description of the lark bidding him good-morrow:—

‘ Thro’ the sweetbriar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine.’

Thus wrote a great scholar and a poet upon one, in whose shadow his own lesser shade loved to combine itself in homage and affectionate remembrances. And, reading this letter of Sir William’s, as we travelled through the tranquil lanes, we became disheartened towards saying a single word of our own, in testimony of the joy we breathed in welcoming such hallowed scenery. Silently we blessed the friend who had guided our thought to such a fairy home, and lingered to quaff more inspiration, whilst beauty linked with beauty, and whispering the one great name, came from the verdant ambush, and wooed us to the dalliance of fervent imaginations. Milton knew these scenes from his boyhood. John Milton, his grandfather, was keeper of the Forest of Shotover. He was a stern man, with strong feelings, and disinherited the Poet’s sire for forsaking the Catholic religion, to which he himself gave preference. The disinherited man became a scrivener, and grew rich. He was a good musician. The son inherited his musical feelings. Milton, the poet, was married to Maria Powell, the daughter of a Royalist

Justice of Peace, at Whitsuntide, at the house of one Blackborough, in the lane of St. Martin-le-Grand. Soon afterwards he quarrelled with his wife, who had coolly deserted him for her father's dwelling. They lived separately and unhappily. She was a light creature, easily won by pleasure and frivolity, and could not endure the spiritual solitude of her sedate partner. Of the reconciliation and of the refuge which the wife's relatives obtained in his residence, during the changes of supremacy incident to the civil war, we read in the ordinary biographies. The wife died in child-bed. Milton lamented her decease. One year flushed with Italian treasures, and with the sounds of the Barbarini festivals still clinging to his thought, he walked in the lanes of the Forest Hill, and won a foolish woman, by the outpouring of his angel spirit, and the vigour of his melodious eloquence. A little while of further date and progress of time, and he is secretary to the armed despot, who is flinging to the earth the cherished titles and forms, inimical to his puritanical purposes,—and soon infirmity is upon him, and body and mind, like fire that struggles upon ice, grow ruinous and cold companions to each other. “He was seen,” says the narration, “in a small house, neatly enough dressed in sable clothes, sitting in an apartment hung with rusted green; he was pale, but not cadaverous, with chalkstones in his hands. Sometimes he swung in a chair—sometimes he played upon the organ.” And so, with glory awaiting to enkindle eternal fame from his dead ashes, he waned away, and became a name kindred with God and heaven and angels, and even with hell's outrageous fiends. Wheresoever the *written word* was shown, he shone like a splendid jewel upon the clasp of the sacred volume.

Another celebrated poet—William Julius Mickle—was yet more intimately connected with Forest Hill. He married the daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Tomkins, of this place, and lies interred on the north side of the Church, without any memorial over his grave. There are several tombstones in the churchyard to individuals of the Tomkins' family, having upon them engraved lines in verse, some of which were written by Mickle himself. Mickle, better known as the translator of Camoens, was at one period of his life employed at the Clarendon Printing Office in the neighbouring city. The Church is simply comprised in one aisle, which is divided into a nave and chancel; at the west end, two huge buttresses, in bold projection, contribute to the rude character of the building. The sketch appended to this description is of a singular imposition of structure, laid on and aloft, at the eastern face of the western gable, presenting from the upper road the appearance of a pack upon the shoulders of a gigantic pedlar. Inside the building are some tombs to members of the Heywood family. The altar cloth, of velvet,



Forest Hill Church.

embroidered, is very ancient, and deserves the inspection of the studious antiquary. Beyond Forest Hill, and continuing the early ride, is the very retired and interesting village of Holton. Formerly here was a capacious manor-house surrounded by a wide moat, and *there*, and not in the Church, as some have imagined, the marriage took place between General Ireton and the daughter of Oliver Cromwell. The parish register commences in 1633; the entry is as follows:—“Henry Ireton, commissary-general to Sir Thomas Fairfax, and Bridget, daughter of Oliver Cromwell, lieutenant-general of the horse to the said Sir Thomas Fairfax, were married by Mr. Dell, in the Lady Whorwood her house, in Holton, 15 June, 1646.” During the existence of the Commonwealth, and the ascendancy of the Puritan party, marriage was simply regarded as a civil bond, and was therefore lawful when celebrated in any private residence, before respectable witnesses. The Ireton family were of Nottinghamshire origin. The arms and motto are to be found in the 58th page of the “Abridgement of Guillim’s Heraldry,” which we mention, not to display so much the knowledge of “coat armour,” as to induce the reader to refer to that volume for the epitaph written by the famous Hugh Peters

upon the Protector's son-in-law, whose panegyric there is a piece of eulogium never sufficiently to be estimated—(crede).

A merry ride we took through the picturesque village. The haymakers were blithe upon the lawn of the new Hall, and the loaded wain combed its grassy burden, as it swept under the trailing boughs of the graceful avenue. Songs we heard, and the laugh of idle children, and the carol of the lark,—sweet concord to all notes of joyfulness and ecstasy. Making a half-circuit from the road in the first instance, through the two places last mentioned, we returned to the highway after the hour's digression. To some mention of an intrusive heap of masonry, attached to the southern side of Holton Church, near to the obliterated porchway, my companion instructed me with a narration:—“It was,” said he, “the mausoleum of the old Squire Biscoe. He lived a fair luxurious life, and took tolerably good care of his corporal client—the gizzard. As age drew near, with some distinct prospect of our universal destiny, he was invaded with an intolerable and invincible horror of dissolution. He induced himself at last to believe that death was all a conceit of a deranged succession of human beings. There was a crisis, he would have it, when men seemed to die, and would not die, but some means had been neglected which should have prevented the depositing of the tranced subject in the suffocating sepulchre. Inconsistently with this intense belief, he took every care to shun the chance of meeting with the bugbear. Were servants seriously afflicted with indisposition, he banished them his habitation. One or two deaths did occur in spite of the Squire; he waged retaliation upon those branches of the trees which had touched the hearse in its exit from the domain, and flung them aside as infected with malady. He appointed sentry-boxes, in which he could avoid the danger of wet clothing in the rainy season, and these were plentifully sprinkled over the park. At last he died—he knew some error was perpetrated; and every one else but himself was convinced he was dying, as he lay in the last sad hour of mortal peril. Still a provision was made. The building against the church wall was erected. The coffin was exalted upon a platform of mason's work. The coffin, the doors—all obstacles were readily to be thrown open, by concerted machineries, at the hour of expected resuscitation. The fresh winds of heaven breathed through the free lattice-work of the charnel windows, and rays of sunshine brightened the sooty web, where the ill-fed spider crouched day by day, listening to the creeping sound of putrid fermentations. The Squire keeps still the while, and grieves that he has been so foully deceived. Sometimes o' nights wakeful matrons hear lock and bolt clashing in the cemetery, and rushing to the casement all in white, discover that the

cottager's donkey is rattling his fetter-locks, and leaping for fresh provender over the hillocks of the departed villagers. Sometimes in thunder-storms, the carriage of the old Squire, and the Squire driving it, ride over the elm tree tops, and rattle and swear together upon the slates of the rectory. This is a vision most frequent to the eyes of old toppers returning from Wheatley in the harvest-time, and rather later home than wives think well for working people. And such is an answer to your inquiry respecting the edifice in question. True, or not, the people of the village told me so some time since; and as they were serious and communicative, I treasured up the legendary information."

The village of WHEATLEY, steep down to the right of the broad high road, has a peculiar bleak appearance, with its straggling stone quarries, and streets watered by the glassy current of a spacious brook. From the considerable number of tippling houses in this village, the people bear an indifferent character. All we could learn of them was much to their shame. I have heard a native triumph by declaring, that "Zure, *We-adly* wur a 'vamous plaze, 'cos dy'e zee water run through a' middle on it, wi' ale o' both sides on him, to zee him safe out on it!" The fact is, in other days, before railroads were invented and old roads were turned aside, Wheatley was the sojourn of hosts of drovers and cattle merchants, who previous to market times found in that humble vicinity a cheap lodging for themselves and their horses and kine; so that if they transacted business with Oxford men, they did not lodge with them, sagaciously knowing, that there was a considerable difference between expenses in the city and the village demands upon their purses. Therefore the taverns remain, though the brave company have departed, and the idle fellows amuse themselves by frequent change of tavern society.

Beyond this place the road sides are replete with admirable scenery. Crossing the Thame, which spreads its wavy crystal through luxuriant meadows, we found all nature alive and stirring,—the fields full of hay-makers, the skies loud with sweet-singing birds, and flowers and the rich perfume of the early harvest-time every where. From the river to the village of Tetsworth, the boundaries of the forward horizon attract with forcible and bewitching outlines of upland-forest and bold mountain heights. To the left, the ancient Saxon and Norman hunting-grounds of the *Brill*; to the right, the solemn sweep of the Chiltern hills, and the shadowed sites of towns and villages, and detached farms, and manorial residences, invited the eager attention of the traveller, and hushed the faint instincts of weariness into repose. There by the wayside the eye becomes accustomed to the everlasting congre-

gations of flint stones, heaped with recurring sameness at every bow-shot of the distance. Sometimes, in the more cumbrous blocks of excavated material by the field-gates or nooks of lanes, we paused to examine the fossil remains of testaceous creatures, bivalves of gentle contour, and the wondrous labyrinth of the stony Ammonite. Oh, had we been nearer to home — something for the studio or the library of our clever cousins would have been secured; but, so far away! we were compelled to say an unkind farewell to the dear-loved treasures of the earth.

An hour before the noon we entered TETSWORTH, which lies at a distance of twelve miles E. S. E. from Oxford. It is a clean and cheerful place, with a wide space of rushy land to the left as you enter, upon which a throng of delighted youngsters were pursuing their holiday pastimes. There is an excellent inn here, which was formerly an amazing posting-house, and is provided with spacious stabling, and a correspondent range of private accommodations. So far as posting is concerned, all is now a desolation, owing to recent changes in the road; and the *one* post-boy, who paraded to and fro before the vacant stalls, looked as lonely as a Siberian exile, and as hopeless as one crossed in love. “Still,” said the landlord, “he cleans his boot-tops, and dandles his whip-thong with affectionate pertinacity daily, and goes to church on Sunday with ‘a guard’ upon his instep as if alive to more active services. Sometimes, too, in the night, he will walk his garret fevered with confused impulses, and open his window to the cool air, and listen to imaginary carriages, and the fancied hubbub of arriving companies. Poor Bob! those empty stables will be the death of him — ‘Dodd’s Reflections’ were positive merriment, compared with the considerations those tokens of the past arouse in his disordered brains. He has not one clear thought, and no wonder, for he shakes his head enough to muddle the finest senses that were ever bottled in a human skull. We don’t know what to do with him, except we send him to some other ruined posting-house, to mingle his afflictions with some other dejected post-boy.”

The humble but ancient church of Tetsworth stands upon rising ground on the eastern side of the village, consisting of a nave and chancel, divided by a plain arch.* The south entrance is surmounted by semi-circular mouldings, beneath which are two figures of religious persons grotesquely sculptured. One of these is a figure habited in priestly attire, wearing a truncated mitre with pendants or *vittæ*; the right hand is raised as bestowing benediction, in

* This has been called of the *Transition* style by more literate antiquarians than ourselves.

the left is a crozier.* The other is a priest, holding a book in the left hand, and pointing with the right to the paschal lamb and staff, which is placed centrally with regard to the two figures. I am of opinion that this sculpture is coëval with the foundation of the edifice. In the floor of the chancel is a brass, much defaced, bearing effigies of a man and woman in the costume of the early part of the reign of Henry VIII.; perhaps these are the "John Gryning, and Alys his wife," mentioned in the Hutton MSS. of the Ashmolean Museum. As it is in contemplation to rase this church, and erect a new one, either upon the site of the present or very near to it, it is of importance that the sculpture and brass should be preserved in the new building as relics of the olden structure, and that they should not be embezzled to ornament the sham ruins of a suburban tea-garden, or to be ticketed in the old curiosity shop of a London collector. We hope the clergyman of the parish will receive the hint graciously.

There are some ancient gravestones in this churchyard; but the clearing tools of Old Mortality could not assist in exposing a single letter to the brightest eye in the Antiquarian Society. "There is one tomb," said my companion, "which contains the sweetheart of a kind old friend of mine;—she was the belle of this village some forty years ago. Of course she had the usual train of fierce admirers, who fed her vanity hour by hour, and submitted to be the rude victims of her girlish caprices. My friend (the friend of my youth) loved her dearly. She was deaf to his words of courtship, and cast him away like a broken needle. Years passed by—she was still beautiful; her lovers were not so numerous by many, but they were more bitter rivals. She left them all in the lurch, and went far away to reside with a distant relative. The fate of a stubborn coquette awaited her; she grew older, and at middle life was still unmarried. After a while, all her kindred died away from her. Then by ill-fortune she lost the annuity she lived upon, in venturing, with the advice of a foolish gossip, to gain something more to it by a suit at law with the executors of those kinsmen. Residing with a family who were afflicted with the small-pox, she took the disorder, and recovering with difficulty, became at once infirm and blind. She was conducted back to this village, and the parish officers interested themselves to procure relief for the miserable creature. Few sympathised with her sufferings, and the poor-house was pointed to as the only shelter. The old rejected lover (my friend) was farming here; he was still single, for he loved her in absence

* On ancient seals Bishops are figured with the pastoral staff in the left hand, Abbots are represented as holding it in the right. The Bishop wears his mitre the broadside before. The Abbot wears it with the horns in front.

as when she was a girl; “*toujours le même!*” He allowed her a cottage, and a weekly maintenance for life, taking good thought and care that the love, which he called charity, should never be known to her as proceeding from his own benevolence. After a lonesome miserable life she died, and then he buried her; and the tears which he had been used to shed, when he saw her poor blind eyes rolling in vacancy upon the Sabbath in the rural sanctuary, were doubled daily, long after her wasted form was buried in this simple churchyard!”



CHAPTER IX.

ANCIENT CHURCH OF EWELME. — VILLAGE OF BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN. — ITS FINE GOTHIC CHURCH. — SKELTON'S ACCOUNT OF EWELME. — EFFIGIES OF THE SON OF CHAUCER AND HIS WIFE MAUD. — TRAGICAL DEATH OF THE DUKE OF SUFFOLK. — WATLINGTON, AN ANCIENT BRITISH TOWN. — SHIRBOURNE CASTLE. — STUDLEY CEMETERY. — UNHALLOWED RUMMAGING OF TIME-HONOURED REMAINS. — LOB FARM. — MURDER OF THE PEDLAR. — HALTON PARK. — A VILLAGE LOVE TALE.



CHAPTER IX.



FTER an early meal and a glass of sound “sherris,” such as can ever be found in the cellarage of the host of the “Old Posting House,” we made good speed to see the monumental glories of the ancient church at Ewelme. The road lay through steep and intricate lanes, of the most irregular construction in the world, but full of wild beauty, and rife with the buds and the wreaths of the exuberant summer-time. Turning off to the right abruptly, instead of passing direct through Cuxham village, we came all at once, after a quarter of an hour’s ride, upon a park mansion, clustered habita-

tions, and a most interesting church in a picturesque situation, flanked by deep verdure, upon an eminence skirting the downward road, along which we had been directed to travel by the intelligent haymakers in a neighbouring meadow. We at once slackened speed, and found

that we were in the heart of the village of Brightwell Baldwin. The principal feature of this fine church is the west end of the tower, which is elaborately worked in Gothic niches. The brasses of this church are in good preservation, and exceedingly attractive. There is a massive altar-cloth, curiously worked in golden tissue of ancient use. In the vestry is a rude chest, painted with representations of armed equestrian figures. All the old casements of this church should be examined for the rarity of the painted glass. There are some odd designs upon the windows in Stone’s Chapel (north aisle). In the same chapel are monuments to the Stone family, who occupied the adjacent Hall, and it contains memorials of the Carleton family. Westmacott has provided one showy sepulchre, and there are several huge deformities niched and nested thickly with hideous urns, which make a very discreditable figure in reference to the dull author of the same. In 1247 and 1250, Richard Earl of Cornwall presented to the Church of Brightwell. Herbert Westphaling,

Bishop of Hereford, was rector of this church about 1561. Dr. William Paul, sometime Bishop of Oxford, lies buried in this church. He suffered much for his loyalty during the great rebellion, having been one of the chaplains of King Charles I. The inn at Brightwell has a very attractive appearance from the church gates; and I dare say such is the opinion of the less devout of the congregation on a Sunday morning. Before the lower story of the building is a trellice of carved work, once a portion of the adornments of the mews at the old Hall, and removed into the village, upon the occasion of a fire, which occurred there several years ago.

Rising from the hollow way to loftier ground, and a wider view of the distant country, we reached the old manor place in the valley of the village of Ewelme, just as the farming youths brought up to the fold the nodding loads of meadow harvest, with grievous signs of heat and toil. To attempt to give any particular description of the church or hospital at Ewelme, would be to fritter away by abbreviation the material for a mighty volume. The church is worth a ten days' journey, to any one who has the slightest fondness for architectural symmetry and beauty, as manifested in the ecclesiastical form. We earnestly recommend the studious to peruse the brief description given in Skelton's "Antiquities of the County of Oxford," which, with the accompanying illustrations, will at the least give some faint idea of the interest attached to the venerable originals. Here lie buried members of the illustrious families, De-la-Pole, Chaucer, Howard, Norris, and Vernon; and in the south-west part of the churchyard are capacious monuments over the descendants of Sir Matthew Hale. "Although," says Skelton, speaking of Ewelme, "this church is in other respects very far superior to other parish churches in general, it has still derived much additional reputation from the two famous monuments which it contains; the first being that of the Duchess of Suffolk, the second that of Thomas Chaucer. The former is hardly surpassed in beauty, and certainly not in the extreme excellence of its preservation, by any monument in England; the latter, from its numerous quarterings, has been an object of curiosity to the most accurate inquirers in heraldry." Again, speaking more particularly of the former, "on the altar-tomb, of Gothic character, lies the effigy of the Duchess of Suffolk, habited in a tunic surcoat, veil, and wimple, with a coronet on her head, and a garter round her left arm. This is one of the three known examples of female sepulchral effigies, decorated with the insignia of the Order of the Garter. Her head reclines on a cushion supported by four winged angels, beyond which is a rich canopy, and at her feet is a lion. On the sides of the monument are angels robed and plumed, bearing shields charged with the arms of De-la-

Pole, and Rouet, and Chaucer, which are variously quartered and arranged." Under these figures you see, through eight double arches, a ghastly emaciation—a figure of the half-naked body of the same lady in her winding-cloth. The whole of the enrichments of this chapel, containing the monument described, are in excellent style. Upon an altar-tomb westward of the Duchess of Suffolk's tomb, are inlaid brass effigies of a knight and his lady, in the costume of the reign of King Henry VI. The armed figure



Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, Chaucer's granddaughter.

is a valuable antiquity. These are the effigies of Thomas Chaucer, the son of the poet, and his wife Maud, the daughter and co-heiress of Sir John Burghurst, in whose right he became possessed of the estate in Ewelme. This wife Maud died in 1437, three years after her husband's decease, and left heir Alice her daughter, who was first the wife of Sir John Phillip, Kt., then of Thomas Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, and, lastly, of William, Duke

of Suffolk, whose tragical death is thus pitifully told in one of the Paston Letters. By reference to history, it will readily be perceived that he was claimed from under the screen of royal clemency by an infuriated people, who laid many crimes to his account, and wished that he should be dealt with accordingly. Retreating from popular fury over the seas, he was slain. Thus runs the original epistle (avoiding quaintness of orthography):—

“ William Somner, 5th of May, 1450. 28 Henry vi.

“ *To the Right Worshipful John Paston, at Norwich.*

“ Right Worshipful Sir,

“ I recommend me to you, and am right sorry of all that I shall say, and have so washed this little billet with sorrowful tears, that ye searee shall read it. As on Monday, next after May day (4th May), there came tidings to London, that on Thursday before (3d April) the Duke of Suffolk came

near unto the coasts of Kent full near Dover, with two ships and a little spinner (pinnace), the which spinner he sent with certain letters, by certain of his trusty men, to Calaisward, to know how he should be received, and with him met a ship called Nicholas of the Tower, with other ships waiting on him; and by them that were in the spinner, the master of the Nicholas had knowledge of the Duke's coming. When ne espied the Duke's ship, he sent forth his boat to wete what they were; and the Duke himself spoke to them, and said he was by the King's commandment sent to Calaisward, &c.; and they said, he must speak with their master; and he, with two or three of his men, went forth with them in their boat; and when he came, the master bid him 'Welcome, Traitor!' (as men say). And further, the master desired to wete, whether, if the shipmen would hold with the Duke, and they sent word they would not in no wise, and so he won in the Nicholas till Saturday (2d May) next following. Some say he wrote much thing to be delivered to the King, but that is not verily known. He had his confessor with him, &c., and some say he was arraigned in their ship, on their manner, upon the impeachment, and was found guilty: also he asked the name of the ship; and when he knew it, he remembered Stacey, that said, 'if he could escape the danger of the *Tower*, he should be safe,' and then his heart failed him, for he thought he had been deceived; and in the sight of all his men, he was drawn out of the great ship into his boat, and there was an axe and a stock, and one of the lewdest (meanest) of the ship bid him lay down his head, and he should be fairly fared with, and die on a sword, and took a rusty sword, and stroke off his head within half a dozen strokes, and took away his gown of russet and his doublet of velvet mailed, and laid his body on the sands of Dover, and some say his head was set on a pole by it, and his men sit on the land by great circumstance (numbers), and pray; and the Sheriff of Kent doth watch the body, and sent his under-sheriff to the Judges to weet what to do, and also to the King what should be done. Further I wot not; but if his process be erroncus, let his counsel reverse it," &c.

The ship Nicholas belonged to Bristol, 1442, and 20th Henry VIIth it was a great ship with "Fore-stages," says the original, and carried 150 men. His remains were conveyed to the collegiate church of Wingfield in Suffolk, and there buried, or, according to others, in the Charter House of Kingston upon Hull. Thus fell William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, who a few days before was the greatest and most powerful person in the kingdom. He served twenty-four years in France, and seventeen without returning home. He was Privy Councillor fifteen years, and a Knight of the Garter thirty. By an

inquisition taken after his death, the jury found, that among other large possessions in this county, which he held jointly with Alice his wife, was the moiety of one hundred acres of wood, with appurtenances in Ewelme, the advowson of the church of Ewelme, and the advowson of the eleemosynary house, or hospital for the maintenance of two chaplains and thirteen poor men, in Ewelme; all which, with many other large possessions, continued to Alice in right of her own inheritance, who lived to a great age at her mansion-house in Ewelme, and died there May 20. 1475, and was buried, with great solemnity, on the 9th of June following, in the parish church. John de la Pole, their son, married Elizabeth Plantagenet, daughter of Richard Duke of York, and sister to King Edward the IVth. The title was restored to him. They had issue, John and Edmund. John, created Earl of Lincoln, was slain at Stoke, 1487, fighting against Henry VII., and endeavouring, moreover, to supplant Henry upon the throne. Edmund, who received the earldom, was decapitated in the reign of Henry VIII., having been prisoner in the Tower from the preceding reign. The property became forfeited to the crown. Such were some of the honours which accrued to the descendants of our rare old English bard, and such were the disasters which in the pursuit of ambition led them into disgrace and dishonourable ends. No one can dwell on the magnificent tomb of the fair countess (Chaucer's granddaughter) without being vividly affected with the fleeting nature of sublunary pursuits; and the nobly attired dame above, and the gaunt sculptured corse beneath, read a sufficient lesson of the moralities which are to be selected from the startling representation. Thus saith Shirley —

“ The glories of our birth and state
 “ Are shadows, not substantial things;
 “ There is no armour against Fate,
 “ Death lays her icy hands on kings;
 “ Sceptre and crown
 “ Must tumble down,
 “ And in the dust be equal made,
 “ With the poor crooked scythe and spade.”

“ The true name of this place,” says Skelton the historian, “ was, in Saxon, *Æwhylme* (Origo-fontis, Springhead).” In Domesday Book it is written *Lawelme*; the French article being in all probability prefixed. Bale says of the Duchess of Suffolk, “ *Aqueline vitam egit* ;” which greatly confirms the derivation above proposed. The licence of King Henry VI. to Ewelme Hospital is dated from his manor of Kenyngton (iij die Julii): we insert thus much for the direction of the curious: — (“ Ex Cartaceo MS. in bibl. C. C. Coll. Oxford), anno M.CCCCXLVIij Hospitale de Ewelme vocatum *God's*

House per Willielmum de la Pole, comitem Suffolciæ, et aliciam uxorem, pro duobus sacerdotibus: uno ad pauperes instruendos: alio ludi magistro ad pauperes docendos uterq. x^l. Minister xvj^d. per Septimanam reliqui, duodecim pauperes xiiij^d. per Septimanam," &c.

Agreeably with the instructions of the wise old clerk of the church, who strongly advised us to proceed onward through Watlington to visit Shirbourne Castle, we turned off from the village over some wide uplands, and urged the wearied beast, to continue the pursuit of antiquities.

Watlington is a small market town, distant about eighteen miles S. E. of Oxford. The church is an ancient structure, but has nothing of considerable interest to delay the curious traveller. There is a singular market-house in the centre of the place, the arches of which are of peculiar construction. Through this town the patriot Hampden was borne bleeding and stricken unto death, after the fight at Chalgrove Field. In a note to "Camden's Britannia," we read, "Watlington, by the name, one would imagine to be of no less than British antiquity, as seeming to point out to us the old way of making their towns or cities, an account whereof Strabo has left us; viz. '*Groves fenced about with trees cut down and laid cross one another, within which they build themselves sheds both for themselves and cattle.*' The same way of fencing the Saxons call *Wazelaf*, hurdles or wattles, from whence the town probably enough might have its name."

Shirbourne is distant one mile from Watlington: in the Dome Boc it is spelt *Scireburne*. Robert D'Oilly and Roger de Iveri held land here at the Norman survey. Subsequently it was the barony of Robert earl of Dreux; thence it passed into the Tycis family; and, by marriage, to the L'Isles. Sir Warine de L'Isle, in the fifty-first year of King Edward III., had licence to embattle his house at Shirbourne, and to make a great park there. Leland says that in more recent times it belonged to the Quatremains; then to one Fowler; and, by exchange, to the Chamberlains. The castle and estate were purchased in 1716 by Sir Thomas Parker, afterwards Earl of Macclesfield. The present owner is Lord Parker, formerly colonel in the English army. Guillim states that the family are descended "from the ancient family of the Parkers who were seated at Norton Lee, in the county of Derby, in the reign of King Henry VI." The castle is surrounded by a fine moat; and some excellent apartments are below the level of the waters, but as dry as other parts of the spacious edifice. The porches can only be approached by drawbridges, the water flowing up to the walls on every side. The surrounding scenery is very beautiful. There is an armoury here, a good library, some few specimens of sculpture, and a few capital paintings. Amongst the



Shirbourne Castle.

latter is an original picture of Queen Catherine Parr in splendid costume. To this is affixed a lock of her hair: —

“ Oh! lucky looks that fawn'd on Catherine Parr :
A woman rare like her but seldom seen.”

As Miss Strickland has observed, she was truly an admirable woman, — for her kindness to her step-children, her piety, her affectionate duty as nurse to the bloated monarch, and for her wise political caution. In the *Archæologia* is a particular account of the desecration of her tomb at Sudley in Gloucestershire, the magnificent chapel of which, once so honoured, is now in base dilapidation. In one of the volumes is an engraving from a drawing of the lead coffin, as it lay disinterred in the year 1782. It was removed about a foot from the surface of the ground. The body was soon partially exposed. It was in good preservation. In the same summer Mr. Lucas, who rented the lands of the ruin, after the body had lain here unbestowed for awhile, examined it more attentively. The body was

swathed in six cere-cloths, and one of the arms was found remarkably fair and moist to the touch. In 1784 it was again removed violently from the place of resting to which it had been consigned, by some ruffians of the vicinity. The vicar interfering, the body was re-interred. In 1786, by permission of Lord Rivers, a *scientific* (?) exhumation took place for the gratification of the Rev. Treadway Nash, and others of the same pursuit. The face was decayed; the teeth had fallen; the body was most perfect; the hands and nails were entire, and of a brownish colour; the envelope of lead was found to be five feet four inches long. This accords with the description handed down to us, "that the queen had fair complexion, hazel eyes, golden hair, and was of a *petite form*." In 1828 the body was entombed within some beggarly out-house, to the disgrace of all who ought to have had power or feeling to save those good remains from such a carrion fate. It is an astonishing fact, that these vile rummagings of the relics of the time-honoured of our country should have been permitted, without the interference of some capable authority. We may readily account for the locks of "golden hair" which have in truth been handed about as presents derived originally from the curious people, who so coolly dealt with the remains discovered at Sudley Cemetery.

Turning home again, and leaving the faint spire of Stoken-church upon the eastward hills, and the solemn range of Chiltern, settling down with gathered shades, in the lone twilight of the evening, we made haste to return through Cuxham waters to Tetsworth, where we arrived as the daylight slowly quenched its lessening fires behind the deep and purpling curtains of the wonderful west. Pausing here awhile for refreshment, and to cheer the dispirited beast, we talked over the scenery and the reflections of the happy day, and made earnest resolve of further flight upon the morrow. As we resumed the road to Oxford, my companion pointed out to me upon the left-hand side of the highway, and at some distance from the boundary, a farm, where the evening light glimmered from the family taper, and shone like a clear star through the sad branches of the trees. The small tavern called "The Pigeons" was then near to us upon the other side, at the junction of the cross ways.

"Darkness," said he, "is a fitting moment for a story of ghostliness or murder. The farm I have shown to you is called Lob Farm: in this field near to it once stood, even in my own remembrance, the stump of a mouldered gibbet, planted originally near to the scene of crime, in the lane called the Lob Lane. The tale is well known in this rural district. The event occurred less than half a century ago."

In the solitary road, with not a sound, but the paces of our own slow quadruped to cheer the lonesomeness away, I sidled carefully to the narrator, who thus related the concise history:—

The Pedlar.

“ A youthful pedlar travelling across the country, with a box containing such small wares (thimbles, needles, tapes, and sham jewellery) as are likely to captivate the Dollys of an agricultural district, paused upon his weary way, to find a mossy seat upon the bank of the Lob Lane; and, so soon as he had disburthened himself of the companion load, commenced his homely meal of plain brown bread, such as was his daily fare. A fierce and hungry-looking fellow ‘ upon tramp ’ passed along the lane, and accosted him, begging, for cruel hunger’s sake! a share of the thrifty meal. The generous boy at once divided the small loaf with the stranger, and they talked and feasted awhile together, hidden from observation in the bend of the cheerless road. When the guest had eaten—at once, and without a sound of warning, he struck the helpless boy on the head with a rugged stone; and securing the box, which he considered to be a famous prize, and taking some slight silver coin from the purse of the victim, he left the body still and bleeding in a trench, and washed his bloody fingers in a hollow which the autumn showers had filled with deep clear rain, and betook himself, by some strange impulse, to the kitchen fire-side at the ‘ Pigeons ’ alehouse.’ It was evening time; I think I have heard them say it was at the *fall of the leaf*, or thereabouts, for the harvest had been gathered, and few men were in the stubble-fields. By the fire-side at the inn sat an old shepherd, conversing with the blacksmith of the village. Two fine fellows—‘ young Coggles of the Lob,’ and ‘ Master Daisy of Lubber’s Hill ’—were ‘ having a deal ’ for a nag over a table supporting the ordinary complement of glasses, jugs, and tobacco-pipes. The murderer called for drink, and enjoyed his mug in silence, repelling the kind curiosity of the rustic party, by brief and sullen answers to their interrogations, till at length he became a suspicious character in their eyes, and their glances fell upon his wiry face, the box, and upon each other with eloquent purpose and rapidity. Just as it grew dark, he would have left the house, for he found, by a sudden gaze around, that he was the object of undivided attention; but a fierce shower descended, and he replenished his glass with something more stimulating, and then dozed, or seemed to sleep for a while. The two young farmers left the room stealthily, to whisper their suspicions to the landlord and his dame, who were much

busied with a maltster upon private affairs in the back kitchen. They had scarcely entered the other room, when a weight fell against the slight door leading into the stable-yard, and upon opening it, to ascertain the reason of the sound, the pedlar-boy lay bleeding there, his pale face streaked with half-congealed streams of his own bright blood. The party were about to raise an outcry, when 'Master Daisy of Lubber's Hill' interposed, and related the presence of the ill-looking stranger in the front room of the tavern. The boy, upon the administration of a cordial, was enabled to stagger into the room with the assistance of the people, and was soon sufficiently revived to relate his cruel treatment, and the plunder of his trifling stores. The landlady would have cleansed him, and changed his attire, but Master Daisy said, 'No!—the ruffian sleeps by yonder fire, and his back is to the door; the boy shall be placed against the kitchen dresser, and an alarm shall be given, and I warrant me he at once confesses to the crime, and is safe in our own power;'—and as he said, so was it performed. Such an alarm was given, as roused not alone the criminal, but the shepherd, and his crony the blacksmith. They started to their legs, and were soon out at the front porch. The thief fell into convulsive fits, and lay writhing and foaming at the mouth, clenching his fingers, and moaning like a wild beast upon the floor. However, in due time he recovered. He made no attempt to refute the charge of assault and robbery. The vision of the boy remained with him for several days afterwards, and he could not be told that he had seen any thing but a horrible ghost, seeking him from the dead. He was tried and executed. He was hung nearly opposite to the tavern, and the gallows remained upon the spot, as a terror to the evil ones, who might survey it from the Oxford road. The poor boy did not long survive the injury he received. He was a great favourite in the country, and was well provided for, but one day he died suddenly, making a journey to a village festival."

With this narration, here abbreviated, and much gossip of cheerful tenor, we lessened the dulness of the return to the city, and arriving at the pleasant way-side inn, at the angle of the roads leading to Wheatley and Holton, we refreshed with a draught of that "irritamen malorum," against which the good parson of Wheatley inveighs so bitterly in the teeth of his bibulous congregation. So soon as we gave our steed the reins for further advance to our hostelrie, my companion (the graphic Pencil) gave announcement of a second story.

"The tale of the murder," said he, "which I have related to you, is devoid of one line of fiction superadded to the history. I will now tell you another story, which is equally true, and which was told to me several years since by

the landlady of the inn we have just left, and who remembers the circumstances, with which she is somewhat connected, as you may learn."

The Love Tale.

"When the building of the new manor-house in Holton Park was completed, and the internal arrangements only were necessary for the comfort of the squire, a considerable body of workmen came down from London to decorate the several apartments—the hall, the state-rooms, and the principal chambers, and to paint and paper after the usual mode. Amongst these decorative artists was one who had the situation of foreman to the rest, being a young man of superior education, agreeable address, and most respectable appearance. These strangers lodged for several weeks in the village of Wheatley, and the foreman resided with a family who were in decent circumstances. Their eldest child was a comely girl, some nineteen years of age, fair as a lily, and as vivacious as a bird unloosed in the mornings of spring. She was so pretty, every one admired her; and so good, that grave old people blessed her from the threshold, as she stood with her knitting or sewing at the door of her father's home. The lodger soon became the lover, and the parents were gratified to believe, that their darling gave affectionate encouragement to one so deserving of her simple heart. As much as possible he delayed his return to his employer's service in town; and even when his comrades had departed from their duty at the Hall, upon pretence of indisposition he stayed behind, to lure fresh kindness and love from the full soul of that pitiful maiden. How *she* loved him, every friend of Mary's joyfully knew; how he returned the love the sequel will determine. The kind old folks hastened the preparations for their union, and sacrificed some little store for their mutual benefit. They left them much alone together, that, as the old woman said, 'their lips might learn to meet betimes, and ask God's blessing frequently on their future state.' At this crisis, a letter came to the lover's hand, who read it with a smile, but did not show it to the maiden, and upon this letter he made pretext to be absent in London for two days—*two days* and *no* more. He caressed his girl fondly, and told her he would be at the cottage on the evening of a certain day. The morning of the wedding had been fixed for the second day after the evening specified. They looked for him as to their own child; but neither upon that evening, nor upon the following day, was he seen or heard of in the village. Easter Monday was the day appointed for the wedding. More than one couple were at the

church door; the bells rang blithely in the cheerful air, and old people, and young lads and lasses, and urchins decked with the first flowers of the year, drew near to give a welcome to the children of those they knew so well, their comrades and gossips of the neighbourhood. Mary was deserted. James was a villain—curses manifold and violent awaited him. The grief of the poor girl—the anguish of her father and mother—are to be imagined, for words can ill relate the situation of a heart that is broken and bleeding from irremediable wounds. After a few months, a deep sadness came over all who knew the family, and especially those who were related to them. Mary gave birth to an infant, and retired into the secret places of her mother's dwelling; and whilst she fed it from her bosom, and wept over it, and kissed the picture of its cruel father, she fell into a deep decline. By some emissary the deceiver learned the truth; and, whilst he was almost unable to account for his own wicked behaviour, he grievously repented of the wrong he had occasioned to the girl and her kindred, and setting aside the evil counsel of his gay friends, who had been more than half his ruin, he arranged his plans, and took coach from London to Wheatley, thinking to fill all hearts with gladness, by submission to the best course that could be recommended him upon his arrival. One beautiful morning he arrived at the inn we just now departed from, and appeared to his old friend the landlady, who gazed upon him with such eyes, that would have turned the bliss of one less guilty into hopelessness and sorrow.

“*What is the matter?*” he inquired: *‘do you not know me? speak to me! What has befallen you?’*

“The sound of a dull funeral bell boomed over and again upon the breezeless air, and startled him with its dismal knell.

“*Who is dead?*” he inquired again; *‘who is dead? for God's sake speak to me! any of your own family? no! I see no signs of death in this habitation. Who are they burying in this village to-day?’*

“*Oh, James!*” she cried, sobbing, and retiring from his presence abruptly, *‘your own poor dear Mary, and her pretty babe!’*

“He could not speak: he staggered to the door; the funeral was moving slowly to the churchyard gate. The London coach at the same instant drove by, and stayed for a parcel at the angle of the road. For an instant his purpose wavered, and then, assisted with trembling to the outside of the vehicle, he buried his face in his hands, weeping and groaning, till it was mournful to hear his burst of affliction. He never was heard of more. The landlady published that he had returned to the village, and many sad things were muttered of his wickedness and shame. I hope he did some good

in after-life to atone for his falsehood, and the disaster which he brought upon his country friends; and if he is dead, may Heaven forgive him, even as that poor girl prayed he might be forgiven, when she clasped her dead infant to her cold heart, and pressed her own pale lips to its pretty motionless ones, and died peacefully, relying upon the mercy of Heaven for acceptation into a better world, she and her darling, for ever!"

By the time this second pathetic story was told, we were in the place of resting, whence we had started in the early morning; and willingly we alighted, to share with generous friends the hospitalities of the late evening hours.



CHAPTER X.

FARRINGDON.—THE CHURCH.—THE UNTON CHAPEL.—SIR HENRY UNTON.—HIS CHALLENGE TO THE DUKE OF GUISE.—LITTLE COXWELL.—COLES-PITS.—SPECULATIONS ON THEIR ORIGIN.—A MODERN DIOGENES.—“THE WHITE HORSE” AT FARRINGDON, AND ITS LANDLORD.—UFFINGDON CASTLE.—THE WHITE HORSE.—THE RIDGE-WAY.—WAYLAND SMITH’S CAVE.—THE MANGER.—LEGEND OF THE VALE OF WHITE HORSE.—THE BLOWING STONE AT KINGSTON LISLE.—UFFINGDON.—ITS FINE CHURCH.—CHARLTON PARK, THE EARL OF SUFFOLK’S SEAT.—MALMESBURY ABBEY CHURCH.—THE TOMB OF ATHELSTANE.—STUMP THE CLOTHIER ENTERTAINING HENRY VIII.—OLIVER THE BENEDICTINE.—HIS EXPERIMENTS IN FLYING.—THE MARKET CROSS AT MALMESBURY.—CHIPPENHAM.—LAYCOCK, A PICTURESQUE VILLAGE.—RUINS OF THE NUNNERY, AND ITS HISTORY.—CALNE.—THE GRAND COUNCIL HELD THERE.—THE CHURCH.—TOMB OF THE GYPSY KING.



CHAPTER. X.



Y one o'clock upon the following day, travelling partly by the railway and partly by slow vehicles, we found ourselves at Farringdon, in Berkshire, and we extended our ramblings into the vicinity. The church is worthy of inspection; there is the "Unton Chapel," and many tombs commemorating the Barkers, Seymours, and Pyes, and the Purefoys of Wadley; it is of an early style of Gothic architecture, with a low tower, the steeple having been destroyed during the civil wars. The Unton Chapel is to the north side of the church, having monuments to the memory of Sir Alexander, Sir Edward, Sir Thomas, and Sir Henry Unton. The tomb of Sir Alexander Unton has figures of brass of himself and his lady, habited in surcoats emblazoned with arms. Sir Henry Unton of Wadley (his residence) was knighted for bravery at the siege of Zutphen. He was twice ambassador from England to France. Fuller, in his "Worthies," says he was the son of Sir Edward Unton, by Anne, relict of John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and eldest daughter of Edward Seymour, duke of Somerset. Being in France in 1592, and sensible of an injury offered by the Duke of Guise to his royal mistress, he sent him this challenge:—

" CHALLENGE.

" Forasmuch as lately, in the lodgings of my Lord du Mayne, and in public elsewhere, impudently, indiscreetly, and over boldly, you spake badly of my sovereign, whose sacred person here in this country I represent; to maintain both by word and weapon her honour (which never was called in question among people of honesty and virtue), I say you have wickedly lied in speaking so basely of my sovereign, and you shall do nothing else but lie whenever you dare to tax her honour. Moreover, that her sacred person (being one of the most complete and virtuous princes that lives in the world) ought not to be evil spoken of by the tongue of such a perfidious traitor to her law and country as you are: and hereupon I do defy you, and

challenge your person to mine, with such manner of arms as you shall like or choose; be it upon horseback or be it upon foot. Nor would I have you to think any inequality of person between us, I being issued of a great race, and as noble a house (every way) as yourself. So assigning me an indifferent place, I will there maintain my words, and the lie I gave you, and which you should not endure if you have any courage at all in you. If you consent not to meet me, hereupon I will hold you, and cause you generally to be held, for the arrantest coward and most slanderous knave that lives in all France. I expect your answer!"

No answer was given to this challenge: he died in the French king's camp at Lofear. From London he was conveyed by hearse to Wadley, and thence to Farringdon, where he was interred with baronial honour, Tuesday, 8th July, 1596. The mutilated figure here represented is dislocated from its former situation, and is said to be the effigy of the spouse of that loyal and pugnacious ambassador of our "spotless queen."

The clerk was very desirous we should visit a *most ancient tombstone!* in the churchyard. Some deluder of shallow pates had converted the second figure of a date upon a venerable slab from 6 into 0, and had thus bewildered the Farringdon authorities.

Farringdon was notable in the time of King Edward the Elder, who had a palace there, and also during the wars of Maud and Stephen. King Henry III. and his suite were entertained also in this town. It was one of the last places which held out for King Charles in the later wars, and in those troubled times the brasses were torn down from Sir Henry Unton's tomb.

As we had much curiosity to visit "Coles-pits," at Little Coxwell, about three quarters of a mile out of Farringdon, to the S. W., we crossed the fields in that direction, exposed to the burning rays of that torrid 23d of June, which will remain seared in our memories for the rest of our mortal lives. The heat of the noonday sun was so intolerable that it exhausted us entirely, and frizzled us like over-done omelettes, as we traversed the open fields. In a lonesome part of the vicinity, and with much difficulty, we discovered the space of ground occupied by the singular excavations. Within an uncultivated area of 14 acres, well burrowed by a community of conies, lie close together 273 pits, varying from seven to twenty-two feet in depth. The diameter of one of them might be about forty feet. These are discussed in the 7th volume of "Archæologia," by the Hon. Daines Barrington, who contends that here was a city of the aborigines of the island; and, as far as I am a competent judge and advocate, I hold with his decision.

He demonstrates from the nature of the soil, which is a fine rich sand, that neither quarry nor kiln has previously existed here, and he believes that the holes have been hollowed with human hands. To use his argument:— Strabo says, that in the island of Ægina the people lived in precisely such hollows, to save a troublesome manufacture of bricks for more perfect dwellings. In Poland there exist such excavated habitations, where they are termed *cimsinks*, in the language of the province. In Malta and Minorca excavated habitations abound. Leland, describing the Black Mountains in Carmarthen-shire, says, — “There be a great number of pits made with the handes, large, like a bowl, and narrower at the bottom, overgrown in the swarth with fine grass, and be scattered here and there about the quarter where Kennett river riseth, that cometh by Carie Kennen, and some of them will receive a hundred men.”

In Somersetshire, also, between Meere and Wincanton, there are others called the *pen-pits*, and many such have been observed in islands on the north-west coast of America. Barrington instances the dwellings of Kamskatka, and applies the simile. An upright stem, with branches rudely lopped away, he thinks, would have formed a central pillar, well secured in the bottom of the inverted cone of excavation. Other lighter branches could then have been joined from circumference to the centre by this support, and afterwards turf and earth would give sufficient shelter. My fellow-student, Charles Johnston, Esq., the African traveller, tells me that in Abyssinia such hollows are made in certain seasons, and, being protected over head, are used as depositories for grain.

Grievous as the day was for pedestrian excursion, we were much gratified by a close inspection of this interesting ground, which, according to the authority first mentioned, must have held nearly 1300 inhabitants. We earnestly advise our antiquarian friends to see the place during their accustomed holyday tour. An illustration would afford but a poor idea of the extent, the depth and relation of the dwellings, and the view from the picturesque locality into the White Horse region is grand and exhilarating beyond measure.

Returning to our inn, we sheltered prudently in a cool apartment until evening, and then we progressed at leisure upon our way to Uffington in the south, a distance of four good English miles. As you leave Farringdon, for the country, there is a curious habitation of an eccentric Briton of later times to be examined upon the side of the thoroughfare. We have sketched it by way of an amusing illustration to our “Wanderings.” We learned that it is tenanted by a stubborn democrat, who, desirous to avoid the assessments, &c. to which others are compelled to submit, purchased a huge *tun*, or *barrel*,

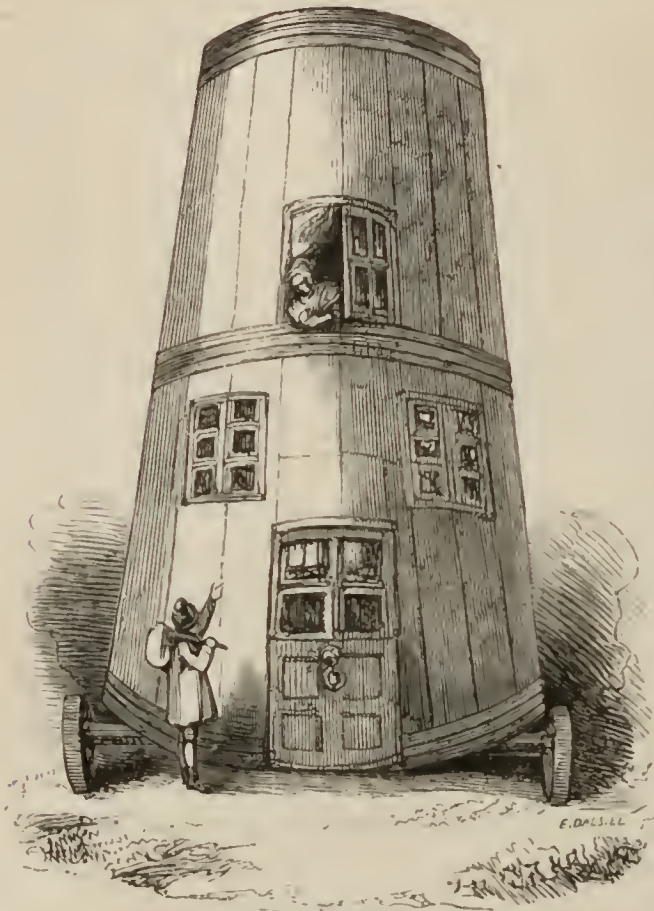
at the sale of effects of a grand distillery. This he placed upon wheels, and, by continually shifting ground, he opposes any attempt to regulate his just

contributions. In fact it is a wooden tower, furnished with windows and stories aloft; and there the modern Diogenes plies his trade, and mocks the apparition of the red book and the gentlemen of the pendant ink-bottle.

We saw some painted glass, covered with fragments of heraldry and flourishings, in the window casement of a mean house, of modern construction, a few paces onward from the Tub Castle; and the grey old man, who lived at the lowly tenement, told us, that but a little while since, and a curious gentleman came and paid some trifling money for permission to carry the more perfect specimens away.

I cannot but believe that this was

once the plunder of the venerable church so immediately near to that line of building. The prospect before us, as we strove for our destination, was alluring; the bold front of Uffington hills; the tranquil villages sprinkled at their feet, alternating with woodland, upon the wild and dappled foreground. Deeper and deeper as we trudged into more obscure regions, and traversed more solitary lanes, the desire for resting accompanied us, and urged good speed. At nightfall we entered the porch of Frankom's comfortable hostelry of the "White Horse," and a good name for ever, to him, for the unaffected zeal he displayed to us during our brief stay with him and his respectable family. He gave us a good repast, and when the Saturday's revellers occupied his cool kitchen, he provided that we should hear some of the quaintest ballads that ever we heard, in mingling heartily elsewhere with rude country people. Having been master of the whip upon the London roads for so many years, he has made good use of much natural power of observation, and we found him an intelligent companion, a hearty landlord, and a faithful guide.



A modern Diogenes.

The next morning, contrary to our discipline, we tarried rather longer in dormitory, to bathe the stiffness from our wearied limbs in luxurious repose; but work was to be accomplished, and before noon we had crossed the Ickleton way (the ancient road), and commenced the ascent of the precipitous chalk hill, upon the summit of which is the very perfect Roman camp, called Uffington Castle. This is four-sided as regards the boundary, measuring 700 feet from E. to W.; 500 feet from N. to S. It is surrounded with a high vallum, and a slighter one on the inside. The views from the inner vallum are very extensive. The celebrated figure of the White Horse is upon the north-western face of the hill, and covers upwards of an acre of ground. It is formed by cutting the turf away from the chalk to the depth



The White Horse Hill.

of two or three feet, and a bequest enables the villagers to cleanse the intruding herbage from the figure annually. It can be seen in favourable weather to the distance of twelve miles. A deep hollowing of the hill-side beneath the figure is called the "Manger;" and a conical hill, a part connected on the north to the main eminence by a horn of this semicircular

sweep, is called "Dragon Hill." In the addenda to "The Britannia" we read of this camp of Uffington as "very large; and at about two furlongs' distance is a barrow called Dragon Hill; but whether from hence one should take this to be the tumulus of Uther Pendragon, since the conjecture is not warranted by any direct testimony from history, I leave to others to determine. As also whether the White Horse on the hill-side was made by Hengist," &c. The whole of this vicinity has been a favourite questing ground for the learned; as the Britons, the Saxons, and the Danes, are in turn upheld as the architects of much rude structure hereabouts to be surveyed.

Wandering about upon the "*Ridge-way*," as the lofty highway is termed, we sought for a full hour to find some informant who could assure us of our latitude and longitude; but not a soul could we find; waiting ever so long and patiently, at last we were compelled wearily to betake ourselves to a lone farm, a quarter of a mile off, which we discovered to be nothing but barn and outbuildings; and there, shouting and whistling for some ten minutes, we contrived to dislodge from owlish refuge in a loft a moon-faced lubberkin of a boy, who pointed to us the grove containing "*Wayland Smith's Cave*," within a gun-shot of the situation we had deserted to seek for aid. The curious place called "*Wayland Smith*" by the Berkshire people, is a cromlech of Sarsden stone (siliceous grit), westward of Uffington Castle, near the "*Ridge-way*," leading over the Downs. It is believed to have been the burial-place of Baceseg, a Danish general, slain at Ashdown, A. D. 871. It has been immortalised by Sir Walter Scott in his dramatic novel of Kenilworth. Every reader remembers, without hesitation, the scene and the dialogue with Tressilian, Wayland, and Flibbertigibbet, at the ancient place. It is hidden from the wayfarer upon the common road by a circular cluster of graceful fir trees, upon the mossy turf in the centre of which the rude stones are lying mostly dislocated from their original adaptations. The truth is, there neither exists, nor ever was there, a cave at this situation. It appears to me there once stood four altar-cairns, placed crucially, connected by trifling walls of stone. In this enclosure the priests might have officiated, the people remaining without the boundary, whilst they offered sacrifices, or libations of imaginary savour, to the manes of their Scandinavian ancestry and recent heroes. The altar portions are made by a huge flat stone being superimposed horizontally upon three other dense flat stones, placed edgewise, on three sides of an imaginary square. One of these cairns alone remains perfect; the one depicted, and generally known as "*Wayland's Cave*," and visited, therefore, in the summer-time by spectacled cronies and pic-nic

juveniles from the neighbourhoods around. I think, too, the name "Wieland" would more directly refer to the Saxon origin than the name generally used.



Wayland Smith's Cave.

"About a mile from the hill," says Camden, "there are a great many large stones, which, though very confused, must yet have been laid there on purpose. Some of them are placed edgewise; but the rest are so disorderly, that one would imagine they had been tumbled out of a cart."

I think it would have been a matter of difficulty to have convinced an antiquary of that date that there was any thing due to the picturesque in his memoranda. The remains at the "Smith's Cave" are remarkably interesting, and presented good colour and form, when we lingered affectionately by their traditional boundary, one scorching day of the lusty summer-time of 1844. As we returned by a different road into the Ickleton way, at the foot of the declivity on the side near to Uffington, we paused to admire the exceeding beauty of the hill-side. The solemn scoop of the hill called "The Manger" is naturally radiated, from the depth to the superior margin, by

lines of raised surface: upon these, and in the alternate channels of green sward, the grass grew fairy tinted, with changeful rainbow variegations, of lighter or more sombre tone, as the huge loitering snow cloud pilfered the sunlight, or cleared away to admit the bright presence of the rejoicing luminary. Still, clouded or illuminated, it was the home of pleasant lights and shadows, and the placid group of social sheep, who grazed in dense phalanx upon the verge of the precipice, seemed lulled from sense of danger by the bewitching repose of the mighty region around their capacious fold.

As the substratum of this district is composed for the most part of chalk, in the worn roads, which are as white as a baker's waistcoat, the reflection of a fervent sky is much greater than we feel in the inland counties of Warwickshire and Staffordshire. The heat was intolerable; and so fast as our tired legs could move (with an occasional rest in the dry trenches of the shadier lane) we hastened to our village inn. The habitation was in that state of tranquillity and arrangement, which is Sabbath rule in such secluded homes. The *Pencil*, who is a hale traveller, and an enduring one, reclined upon the primitive sofa, and perused the appropriate verses written by the poet Grahame upon "The Day of Rest."

"How still the morning of the hallow'd day!
Mute is the voice of rural labour, hush'd
The ploughboy's whistle, and the milkmaid's song.
The scythe lies glittering in the dewy wreath
Of tedded grass, mingled with faded flowers
That yester-morn bloom'd, waving in the breeze.
Sounds the most faint attract the ear;—the hum
Of early bee, the trickling of the dew,
The distant bleatings midway up the hill;
Caltness sits throned on yon unmoving cloud."

I was in little humour for minstrelsy. With a blistered brow I rushed to the coolness of my woodbined dormitory, and scribbled lines of remembrance to wife and children far away. However, in the cooler afternoon, and after due allowance of lamb and lemonade, the spirit grew stronger, and I thus affected rhyme:—

Vale of White Horse.

Berks, June 24th, 1845.

It was one glorious evening,
The West was spann'd with gold,
And wild and glimmering clouds were spread
In the celestial fold;

When from the Belgic boundary,
 And round Pen Dragon's hill,
 A sight was seen and sounds were heard,
 That hush'd the wild-bird still.

Five thousand stern invaders,
 Victorious on the plain,
 Lifted their battle blades to heaven,
 And trampled on the slain.

By cairns and temples hoary,
 The sudden tumult sped,
 The woods return'd the Saxon's voice,
 Exulting o'er the dead.

And far and wide extending,
 The butcher'd ranks lay low,
 Of the ghastly, painted Briton,
 Twined with his fairer foe.

War clubs, and scythes, and javelins,
 Bestrew'd the broken ground,
 Mothers and little quivering babes,
 With life-streams bubbling round.

Upon the Druid's sepulchre
 The thirsting raven stood,
 And waited but for silence
 And the Festival of Blood!

The strong ones knit together,
 And raised their bucklers high,
 Exalting one of noble form
 In the red light of the sky.

Thus spoke the lofty warrior:—
 “Sheathe not the blade so soon!
 But labour yet till twilight eve,
 And the coming of the moon.

“Here, where the ‘Golden Dragon’
 Unfurl'd its feebler wing,
 Sound high the harp! sound high the voice!
 And Woden's anthem sing!

“And deep upon the bosom
 Of the soil that lies below
 Engrave the ‘Courser's’ semblance,
 That o'er land and sea doth go:

“ The fiery-eyed — the proud one —
 The warrior's friend in need,
 The lovely one on banners!
 The emblem of our speed!

“ The turf shall hide the foeman,
 The earth shall be his bed,
 That emblem on the hill shall be
 A curse to all who fled!

“ And not a ghost shall wander
 Upon the Albyn plain,
 But the ‘White Horse’ shall scare him
 To dismal depths again.

“ Shout! for in after ages
 Our dauntless sons shall be
 Firm as the form imprinted here,
 Firm on the land and sea!

“ Woe to the vanquish'd foemen!
 Speed to the noble horse!
 Not all the oaks of Druid land
 Shall stay his thunder course.

“ Sound battle-blades and voices!
 Sound harp and ringing mail!
 Dig the white feet and flowing mane
 Deep in the shadowy vale!”

By dawning of the morning
 To distant tribes at bay
 Appear'd the startling vision,
 In woodlands where they lay.

They clasp'd their fearful children
 Close to their trembling knees,
 And wept to think the Roman bark
 Was wide upon the seas.

And soon the proud men vanish'd,
 And Saxon standards flew
 From the centre of the Angle-land
 To ocean's boundary blue.

Among the woods and mountains,
 In many a secret cave,
 The Welch harp told in other times
 The anguish of the brave.

Shame on the Norman lion!
 That proud and selfish beast
 Hath slain the good, and clutch'd the poor,
 Cold-hearted be its feast!

But triumph to the Saxon steed!
 Which flutters in its shene
 Upon the gorgeous banner
 Of our young maternal Queen.

To gaze upon that emblem
 May her true children stand,
 And think of the ten thousand hearts
 Would bleed for Father-Land!

About two miles from Uffington, S. E., at a place called Kingston Lisle, there is a singular Sarsden* stone, a huge block supported against a wide-spreading tree, at the front of the porch to a small tavern. This is the notable "Blowing Stone," and as great a curiosity to the natives as to ourselves, and other pundits, who at Oxford directed us to shape our pilgrimage thither. The accompanying illustration is correct. Upon week days the "Lion" is generally exhibited upon payment of a small fee. The peculiarity

* This is of the same kind as the stones composing the "Wayland Smith." The people call it *Sarson stone*. Does this bear reference to the *Scyrstan* or Four-shire stone, near the village of *Sarsden*, two miles and a-half S. W. of Chipping-Norton, celebrated as the spot on which King Canute was defeated in 1016, by Edmund Ironsides; which *Sarsden* Olaus Wormius calls *Sejerstan*, interpreting it *sejer* victory, *stan* stone? Near to *Sarsden* are the *Rollright* monumental stones, which, says Skelton, have every signature of Celticism. The *Sarsden* or *Druid sandstone*, is fourth on Buckland's list of tertiary stratifications. It occurs in Dorsetshire, Sussex, Buckinghamshire, as well as in Berkshire and Wiltshire. It generally occurs in the form of boulders, promiscuously scattered over the surface or imbedded in diluvial deposits. These huge blocks and boulders of siliceous sandstone are composed of granular quartz, occasionally imbedding flints and other extraneous bodies. In Berkshire and Wiltshire these stones are distinguished by the provincial term "Grey-Weathers." Of this substance Stonehenge and other Druidical monuments are composed, a circumstance giving rise to its geological appellation. The colour may be white-grey, or reddish-brown, the texture is sub-crystalline. In the bulk are sometimes found condensed chalky matter, and sometimes fragments of a dark green substance, the nature of which is unknown. In Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Sussex, it appears to have been used by the early inhabitants for landmarks, and to denote the boundaries of towns and villages, to commemorate the sites of battles, &c. also as sepulchral monuments; and to perpetuate the memory of chiefs, and to build altars of pagan sacrifice. In England no regular stratification has been discovered, and its geological position is undetermined. It is figured below plastic clay in Buckland's arrangement. "It seems probable," says the erudite Dr. Mantell, in his "Fossils of the South Downs of Sussex," p. 253., "that the ancient Britons regarded this sandstone with superstitious veneration, for besides employing it in their temples, Kist-Vaens, &c. they converted the pebbles and smaller stones into amulets and beads."—F. P. P.

of the shapeless mass lies in this. Many of the Sarsden stones are tunnelled throughout with narrow cylindrical passages, as if softer material had crumbled and escaped soon after their first condensation from the native deposit, and the



The Blowing Stone.

“Blowing Stone” is probably so perforated in an angular or in a cochlear direction. The aperture to the mouth-piece used is closed with a wooden trap upon rude hinges. This is fastened with a padlock and chain. The exhibitor pompously blows into the aperture as into a horn, and, by a clever adaptation of the lips, a terrible sound may be produced from the interior. The landlord of the inn made great difficulty about permitting us to have a “blow” upon the Sabbath-day, “because,” said he, “it do so tease the Squire at Kingston Hall” (which is three-quarters of a mile from the stone). However, as he perceived we were odd folk, and that we had a sketch of the Berkshire wonder, upon the exchange of our silver key for his iron one, we had liberty to unfasten the lid. With slight exertion, and some patience, I succeeded in producing the reverberation. For once in my existence I astonished myself. The noise was like the bellowing of behemoth, or the snorting of a megatherium.

The note re-echoed from the surrounding hills, and moaned in the adjoining woodland, and, had it not been for the repetition upon a second and third trial, I should have believed I had been the dupe of a concealed ophicleidist. The noise drew all the Sunday company out of the ale-house. The host seemed uncomfortable, and we retreated, the lubbers looking after our trail wrathfully and gloomily, as if we had committed a sacrilege.

The morning after our visit to Kingston we entered the fine church at Uffington. Its early architecture, the beauty of the internal proportions, and its general symmetry, have made it a theme amongst the learned in architecture, and Mr. Frankom told us that architects from the metropolis were here in the summer season sketching for an entire week at a time. It is most deserving of attention. There is only one figure-tomb in the church, and that is in the daubed and goggle-eyed manner of the Stuart period. Taking leave of our capital host at the White Horse Inn, who invited us to shelter again with him to see the wrestling, the racing, the back-sword playing, and rude sports of next Uffington revels, which are maintained upon the adjoining hills annually, or every second year, we gave him our benison, and started for Malmesbury, which, partly by railway, and by walking a distance of 12 or 14 miles, we reached, worn out with heat and fatigue, in the evening of the same day. Entering the town, and a mile distant northward from it, we passed through Charlton Park, the seat of the Earl of Suffolk. The hall is built from a design by Inigo Jones. We were ill-disposed to survey the mansion, — which contains many articles of taste, — but contented ourselves with an inspection of the church, which, notwithstanding it is grossly disfigured at the eastern end by the monuments, so ill suited to their situation, still contains some interesting architectural detail, especially about the pillars of the interior. The Abbey Church of Malmesbury, in its glory and in its ruin, has been so long the theme of antiquarian reverence, that we decline further to illustrate the well-used subject of wonder and eulogium. It had been our earnest desire to view those gigantic ruins, and to compare, from actual observation, the readings of the past with our own extravagant imaginations; and we were not disappointed. In their period of magnificence they were a by-word of excellence, in their downfall they are sublime. We were shown the tomb of Athelstane, who was one of the benefactors to the foundation. It is a tomb of later commemoration, and out of place, for that monarch was actually buried in the quire. He was the pet of early romance writers, and a divine hero in the category of the Arthurs and Pen-Dragons of the day. Thus says Ritson in his *Chronicle of Engleland*: —

“ After Bladud was heir
 Ys oune sonne that hatte Leir,
 He made Leircestre with gome
 And yef yt his oune nome
 After him reignede his sone bold
 That was yeleped Denewold.
 He made Malmesbury,
 Lacock and Tettesbury,

(And then)

Edwarde reignede here
 Vour ant tuenti yere :
 At Wynchestre liggith his bon
 Buried in a marbre ston.
 After him reignede Athelston,
 Gode knighte ant hardi mon,
 Both by day ant by night,
 Well he held his lond to right :
 All the Theynes of Walschelonde
 He made bowe to ys honde.
 Thilke kyng Athelston
 Heve a sister—so fair wommon
 That in this worlde, me wist non
 So feir leuedy of fleysch ant bon.”

Although this language is a goodly riddle, we continue for the sake of the romance; for Hugh, king of France, sought this daughter, and sent his messenger to her sire.

“ The erle Edulf of Boloyn
 The erles sone Baldwyn of Coloyne
 Thre hundred stedes mylk whyte
 * * * *
 The bridles wer for the nones
 By go with precieuse stones.”

With these were other giftes, viz.

“ The Emperoures suerd Constantin,
 The scaurlet wes gold pur ant fin ;
 Therinne wes closed a nail gret
 That ede thurh Gode’s fet.

Also,

* * * the spere
 That Charlemayne wes wont to bere
 To fore the holy legiorene.
 * * * *
 And a part of the Holy Rode
 That God shedde on ys blode,
 Hit was closede feir ant well
 In a cristal everich del :
 Ant thre of the thornes kene
 That were on Gode’s Hed sene.”

There was also a rich crown of gold for Athelstane's sister, Hylde or Hilda. The bones of many learned and great men reposing here were disturbed and permanently dislodged at the Reformation.

“ Who sees these dismal heaps but would demand
 What barbarous invader sacked the land?
 But, when he hears, no Goth, no Turk did bring
 This desolation, but a Christian king,
 When nothing but the name of zeal appears,
 'Twixt our best actions and the worst of theirs;
 What does he think our sacrilege would spare,
 When such th' effects of our devotions are?”

J. Stump, one of the most eminent clothiers of that period, and a resident in Malmesbury, had the honour to entertain his sovereign at his private board. It happened thus. King Henry VIII. had been hunting with his Court in Bredon forest, and was much hungered, and therefore he sent messengers to the stalwart clothier to say he would dine with him in the noon. The unexpected favour completely upset the usual economies of Master Stump's household. How to provide for so many hungry people he could not imagine. At last it was suggested to him that the army of workmen he employed and fed should fast for that day without their noon-tide meal. Good promises, never broken, reconciled the gaunt fullers to this arrangement, and so the king was feasted upon good plain Wiltshire food, and went away in facetious humour with his humble servant.

Camden, speaking of the ruin of the monastery, says the Minster would have fared no better but for J. Stump, who redeemed it from the Crown Commissioners; but it was his son William Stump who gave 1500*l.* for the demesne. For some time the church was filled with looms and drying-lines, but, after a while, the artizans refused to work, alleging that the place was haunted, and that they had nothing but misfortunes for residing there.

Oliver the Benedictine is connected with the local history in a strange manner. He was born near to the monastery, and “from the cradle to the convent there were few paces,” says the historian. He became a monk therein. He was much addicted to mathematics and judicial astrology. Of the comet which happened in his age he prophecied—“*Venisti? venisti? multis matribus lugendum malum? Dudum te vidi, &c. &c. Art thou come? art thou come? thou evil to be lamented by many mothers. I saw thee long since, but now thou art much more terrible, threatening the English with utter destruction!*” And soon after, says the narrator, came the Norman Conqueror, ruining life, law, and liberty. Having a mind to

try the truth of poetical reports (continues the story) *an facta vel ficta*, he contrived for himself a fine pair of wings, and, having announced his discovery and his intentions, in the sight of gaping hundreds he leaped from the Minster roof. He flew a furlong, and then fell to the ground, sadly contused, and crippled for the rest of his life. He died five years before the accession of the Conqueror to the throne of England. The art of flying has seriously engaged the attention of other ingenious men. I am myself acquainted with a surgeon who made an Oliverian attempt in the mining regions of South Staffordshire. When arrayed in the garb of volition, which consisted of lath and canvass, he looked like the stage owl in *Der Freischutz*, between two barn doors. I have no doubt he had perused the enticing account of the *Sieur Besnier* in the *Philosophical Transactions*, 1681. *He* began by leaping from a three-legged stool, and at last attained the desirable perfection. He immediately left his wife and family, and was never heard of more!

There was an alms-house at the south entrance to the town. The pretence is made to keep up this institution for poor women. We visited it, and desire others should do so if they would learn how ancient intentions are gone for ever, and how the bones of the poor grow drier as the world gets age. It is called *St. John's*, I believe. This is what *Leland* calls "the Poor hospital, where a nunnery used to be, about the South Bridge." We were told one *Robert Jenner* built other alms-houses, which he endowed; but, the deeds being lost or hidden, the charity died. I questioned a miserable old woman, who was peering out betimes the next morning for her farthing's worth of skim milk, and she told me she received about eightpence a week from this attenuated bequest. We say, "A curse for the stomachs of those who feed upon the principal!"

We must not omit to mention the noted market cross at *Malmesbury*, which *Leland* has described with his usual conciseness and pith. "There is a right fair and costly piece of work in the Market Place, made all of stone, and curiously vaulted, for poor market folks to stand dry when rain cometh. There be eight great pillars, and eight open arches, and the work is eight square, one great pillar in the middle. The men of the town made this piece of work *in hominum memoria* (*Henry VIII.*'s time)." This has been frequently engraved. Our hearts yearned to tarry in this abundant scene of recollections, and we glanced to the silvery *Avon* and longed to scrutinise the rural beauties of its gentle shores, but, unfortunately for us, eremitical as we are in our provender when there is need of the brain, we were poorly lodged and miserably provided for in the large hostelry we had selected, and the listless

landlady was a match to the gunpowder which sometimes lies concealed beneath our amiable exterior.

Taking advantage of a carriage to Chippenham announced for half-past six of the following morning, we booked places, and, after an ill night's rest, awoke to be hastily dressed, and as hastily mounted upon a stunted vehicle, which might have been called *hearse* but that it looked *omnibus*, or *omnibus* but that it looked *hearse*, it was such a dingy convenience for so short a journey. The man who drove it called it *coach*; we concluded, therefore, that it had seen many stages of change, and was lately the victim of what the new Anglican clergy call "A Restoration." It conveyed us, however, to Chippenham, through an uninteresting space of country, which improved the nearer we arrived to our destination. Chippenham is well known to travellers in general as a good open town, celebrated for its cloth manufacture. Many portions of the ancient building are remaining, and the church is worthy of inspection, having been founded by one of the Hungerford family.

Camden says, speaking of this:—"In those times (Saxon) it was the country residence of the Saxon kings, which King Alfred by his will bequeathed to his younger daughter. Now there is nothing worth seeing but the church." In the antiquarian manner we corroborate his decision. The inn where the conveyance unloaded was the sign of "The Angel:" a red-faced dirty waiter ushered us into a dirtier room, and pestered us with civilities. My friend christened him "the dirty devil to the Angel." If he lives in the same situation the title is secured to him. We were disposed to render him appropriate heraldry, and had proceeded so far as "he beareth *sable*," when we were interrupted by a couple of bottles of "soda in water." We wanted a horse and chaise. At this inn "they only hired out so far as six miles, and sent their own coachman with the gents:" singular caution! and so very sociable! By dint of hard persuasion we procured a fierce pony and four-wheeler from an inferior proprietor, and drove merrily away as the market-people were entering to their weekly business. We first halted at Laycock, or Lacock, which is a parish and village in the hundred of Chippenham, and distant about three and a half miles from it. The road thither is full of interest and beauty. The village is ancient and picturesque, and has a wonderful smack of other centuries about it. One street, leading to the church, is replete with beetle-browed tenements, of primitive construction; and there were queer and strangely-vestured old women and crippled men about the porchways, and at the hollow windows, who reminded you of the subordinates of the Elizabethan stage, or the loose work of the dreams we enjoy when we sleep with dim carved furnitures in some manorial

chamber. There is an ancient stone cross in one of the streets; and the tattered mendicant, who basked in the sunshine near to it, gave notice of it, and spoke as flippantly of the venerable ruins in the purlieu as if he had been a disbanded friar.

The church contains some handsome details of a good period, and the monuments are worth the inspection. In the chapel, north of the communion is a tomb, and to the side of it is an elegant shaft which has once borne a "sainted mother," or the figure of some other goodly person, upon it. Within the sanctuary, upon the wall, is an inscription as follows:—

Near this,
Enclosed in Oak
Of an English Ship of War,
Is all that remains in this world
Of the lamented
Rear-Admiral Charles Fielding.
Born, 31. Aug. 1780.
Died, 2d Sept. 1837.
Lineally descended from
Basil Fielding, 4th Earl of Denbigh,
Of the House of Hapsburgh,
And Count of the Holy Roman Empire.
"Crescit sub pondere virtus."

The ruins of the adjoining nunnery are extensive; more so than the other houses of the kind in England. The cloisters are tolerably perfect, and much that was conventual is attached to the present residence of H. F. Talbot, who received the estate from an heiress of the Sharingtons, to which family it was granted 32d Henry VIII. There is a copy of the Magna Charta as confirmed by Henry III., preserved amongst other famous records in the mansion; but the proprietor was from home, and it was forbidden to view the interior in his absence. This deed was sent to Ela, Countess of Salisbury, during the period she held the shrievalty of the county of Wilts, for the use of the knights and others who held lands in Wiltshire by military service. There are capacious vaults under the cloisters, some of which appear to have been in use for kitchens and cellarage to the immense establishment. In one of these is preserved the tomb of Ela, the foundress, removed from the centre of the desecrated choir, with a quaint inscription:—

*Infra sunt defossa,
Elae venerabilis ossa,
Quae dedit has sedes,
Sacras monialibus aedes,
Abbatissa quidem
Quae sancte bibit ibidem,
Et Comitissa Earum,
Virtutum plena bonarum.*

In another there is preserved an immense stone trough, said to have been used for pickling the conventual beeves and bacons. Ela the countess (accord-



Vaults of Laycock Abbey.

ing to Tanner) laid the foundation of this religious house April 16. 1232, in land called Snaylesmead ; on the same afternoon she founded that at Henton, in Somersetshire, for Carthusian monks. The religious ladies here were about eighteen in number, of the order of St. Austin. The abbey was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St. Bernard ; and the estates at the dissolution were valued 203*l.* 13*s.* 3*d.* per annum. There are several imperfect impressions of the Seal in the Chapter House at Westminster ; viz. the Virgin and infant Jesus beneath a canopy, under a representation of a church, in an arch whereof was a monk kneeling at prayer. The legend ran thus :—

S. Convent : Beate Marie, Sancti Bernardi, D' Lacoc.

In the reign of Richard I. the young heiress of D'Evreux, Earl of Salisbury, had been carried off, and secreted by her French relations in

Normandy. To discover the place of her concealment a knight of the Talbot family spent two years in exploring that province, at first under the disguise of a pilgrim (*induit se habitum Peregrini*, says the original "historiette," in the records of the house); till, having found where she was confined, in order to gain admittance he assumed the dress and character of a harper (quasi Cytharisator); and being a jocose person, exceedingly skilled in the "gests of the ancients," (the precise idea of an ancient minstrel! says a note to Percy's Reliques) so they called the romances and stories, which were the delight of that age, he was gladly received into the family, whence he took an opportunity to carry off the young lady, whom he presented to the King; and the King bestowed her on his natural brother, William Longespée (son of Fair Rosamond), who became in her right Earl of Salisbury. He died in 1226; she survived him seven years, having retired to lead a religious and secluded life in Laycock Nunnery. The situation of the building is low, but the country around is exquisitely varied. The river Avon leads its placid waters close to the rear of the convent ground; and from a neighbouring height is a splendid panoramic view towards the north-west, which would amply remunerate long hours of pilgrimage. Leaving to the right Bowood Park, the seat of the Marquis of Lansdowne, and driving towards Calne, a superb landscape opens soon to the right-hand of the road, and far away to the horizon, renewing the idea of our first glimpse of the vale of the White Horse, from Farringdon, and the Druid aspect of the Belgic upland. The British and Roman castramentation upon those hills is abundant; and one has only to glance over the outlines of earlier research to discover how much may yet be done and suggested by the zealous archæologist of our own times, for the perfection of the defective histories of the past.

The "White Horse," so evident upon the hill called Oldborough Castle, upon the verge of the landscape, as you near Calne, is a much better figure than the one at Uffington, and seems to us to owe its regularity to the diligent progress of a more recent spade. There is too much of the *Sporting Magazine* look about the delineation, and it seems carefully contrived for an effect from the distance.

There is not much to be seen at Calne. It is a place memorable in history for the grand council held here, to argue respecting the celibacy of the clergy: when the debate was at its fever heat, the floor betrayed the earnest congregation, and bishops, earls, and lowly clerks, fell mingled together, shrieking, to the ground. St. Dunstan's chair rested upon a beam which retained its hold to the wall, and so he escaped injury; this was attributed (in his life) to miraculous interposition. Henry of Hun-

tingdon thinks it was a visible token of the indignation of the Almighty, moved against the sinful nobility who in the year afterwards slew the king. It is marvellous how some of those quaint historians reconciled themselves so frequently to think *for* Divine Providence. Nothing can be more reasonable than that a dilapidated council chamber should vibrate with the pressure of an imposing multitude. We should have received another version of the story, or its application, had the busy saint fallen with the rest, and fractured a few ribs, or dislocated a thigh from the hip-bone: then, perhaps, the page would have denounced the treason of the nobility; and those who read history to copy history would have assented to the invective, as Will of Avon lisps so prettily in his poem of Venus and Adonis:—

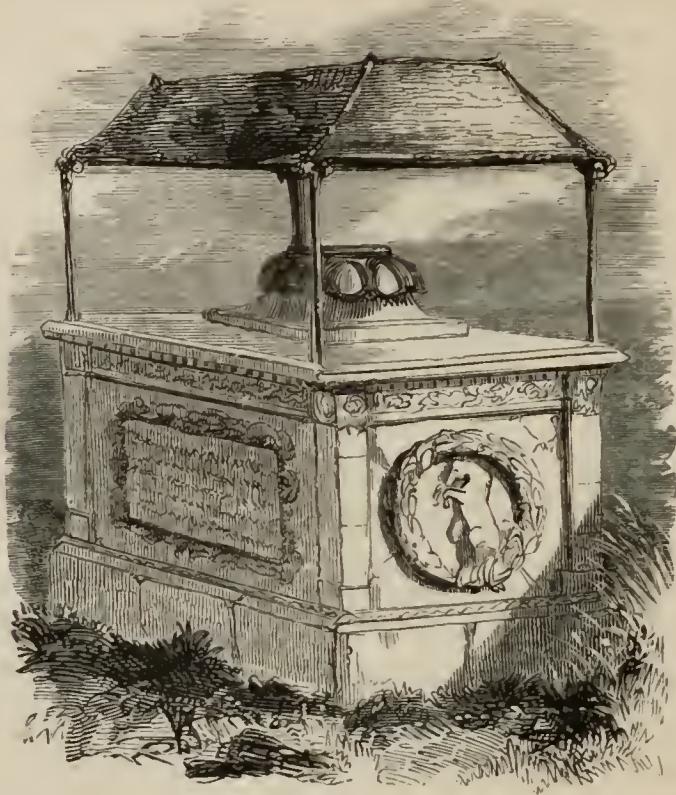
“ She said, 'tis so ;—they answer all, 'tis so,
And would say after her, if she said no ! ”

The town of Calne is an ancient borough and market-town, supposed to have originated from a Roman colony near Studley. It is governed by guild stewards, and an unlimited number of burgesses. In the time of Henry III. there was a hospital of St. John in Calne, governed by a master warden, or prior. There is also a notice of annual rent and services due from the master to the abbess of Laycock, for a tenement and yard-lands in Oftcote; this bears date 8th Ed. I. In 8th Ed. III. Robert de Hungerford, Knight, gave to the wardens of this hospital certain lands and rents in Stockleigh, for the maintenance of a priest, to sing mass at the altar of St. Edmund. There were some valuable vestments with this gift. In the 26th year of King Henry VIII. it was valued 2*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.* The incumbent is registered as obtaining a small pension at the dissolution.

The inhabitants are principally engaged in the manufacture of cloth. The church is well worthy of inspection. There are some fine windows of three stages, each window is surmounted by four diminished archworks of broad cinquefoil in the tracery. The arches of the aisles have been remarkably well adorned, and are of good proportion, but they are now sadly defaced. The communion is deformed, or rather desecrated, with a medley of monumental work. Every man who could afford a tablet has ventured to glorify his names and titles in the blaze of the eastern window. It is unpleasant to see so much vanity and tawdry in the very core of the sanctuary; but—

“ Fools rush in, where angels fear to tread.”

In this churchyard there is the tomb of one called a “king of the gipsies.” We have sketched the tomb; the inscription runs thus:—



“ Under this tomb lieth the body of **INVERTO BOSWELL**, son of **HENRY** and **ELIZA BOSWELL**, who departed this life the 8th day of February, 1774. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”

My companion, who had entered into the merits of our guide, made inquiry as to the character of the “monarch of the lanes,” thus nobly sepulchred. The clerk’s deputy (for such he seemed to be) passed the cuff of his right sleeve delicately and adroitly beneath his nostril upon the upper lip, and then pocketing our contribution, gave tongue to this brief recitation:—

“ I don’t know—it’s a goodish bit since, you see; but Nelly Jones she knows, because she’s a-going a’ ninety year or more, and she had it from them as followed the burying. You see, sir, there was gipsies in White Horse Vale, and this young un before his turn come to be king on ’em. Nelly Jones says that Price, the tinkler’s grandfather, told her as an old doctor as knew Latin, and all sorts of things, ordered the lad to be christened ‘Inverto’ as soon as he was born of his mother, because ‘Inverto’ means as *he wasn’t born like other people no how*, but I don’t know nothin’ about old wives’ talk, so there it must be. Well, when he grow’d up he went all over the world, they say, with the camp, and the donkeys, and the rest; and at last, when he was made king, he lived with his father and mother, near Uffington, which made ’em

put the 'White Horse' on his tomb, for the sake of the place. They made no show, as some of the gipsies do, but seemed very poor; and men, women and children were all as brown as a basin of coffee grounds. Well, the father and mother couldn't tell what to make of their son, for all at once he seemed going into a decline, and none of the physicianers they took him to could make any great hand of him. Time went on, and they found out he was desperately in love with a farmer's daughter, down in the vale there. The farmer's daughter was fond of him; but her father threatened to hang and drown her, and twenty things beside, if ever she thought of going to church with a Heathen gipsy, because it ran in his head the whole set were not one squint better than born rogues and common thieves. Well, sir, it wouldn't do no how for the young chap to die because he couldn't have the farmer's daughter; so old Boswell and his wife for once in their lives dressed themselves up in such a proud way as no one ever saw before, and marched into the Grange one morning just as the farmer was looking over his Michaelmas bills. Well, as Nelly Jones says, after a grand huff and a precious wrangling, this was what it all come to. The gipsy offered to count guinea for guinea with the girl's father, as long as he liked to go at it, provided he should say yea to the match if Boswell laid down the most of the gold on his own side the kitchen table. Now! the game began, for the farmer loved money, they say, and put his whole soul in it at all times. The farmer's bag was soon emptied. Boswell matched the sum, and his wife popped into his fist a second bag, to carry on the bargain; so they all shook hands round, and the girl was won. The young man got lively again, but it lasted just a week; for the lass put on something light to go a merry making in, at a brother's 'outcome,' and died of an inflammation in no time. It was all over with King Boswell. He never lifted up his face after they put her under ground. They moved him near to Studley about Christmas, and he died just as the sheep began to drop their lambs, about the beginning of the year."

We were in too much haste to woo other particulars. Our nag snorted suggestively at the door of Mr. Bladon's good house of cheer for travellers, and we rode towards Chippenham again, laughing heartily at a new story of the "Blade of Venison," which has hung untouched for so many years in the open passage leading to the stabling of the hotel, which we saw with our own curious eyes, and which, for all we know to the contrary, is hanging there at the present season. We were told by a facetious packman in the courtyard that the "*Blade of Venison*" was haunted! It was bespoken a long while ago by a London gourmand, who frequented the house. He died before he could complete the preparations for his annual Wiltshire tour. A button

dealer travelling the same way directed the venison to be cooked for his Sabbath dinner the day he sheltered at the inn. On the Saturday night—midnight it was—and all in the house were asleep, the man with the stomach was roused from a comfortable slumber by the tinkling of the brazen rings of his bed curtains. The deceased venison fancier stood at the side of the pillow, and gazed upon the terrified snoozler with eyes of mingled wrath and affliction. The ghost had a pure white napkin tucked under its chin, and the whole figure stood in the length of an oval of pale blue flames. After a while, slowly as a coach lamp upon a lengthening road in a dark night the spectre vanished, and the only words which escaped from its tallowy twinkling lips as it retreated through the chimney board were these:—“I want my venison!” Suffice it to say the ghost-seer was away from Calne by day-break, and the venison came under the ban of superstition.

“Has the ghost ever re-appeared?” inquired the Pencil.

“Once only,” said the north countryman. “Upon the anniversary of that glutton’s death, (he was a greedy man, to be sure!) that is the *first* anniversary, a figure of a frightful form, similar to the one which frowned upon the button maker, was seen by ‘Boots’ at twelve o’clock one moonlight night, as the moon was ‘paddling through a cloud,’ as he expressed it. It stood under the porchway, gazing pitifully upon the suspended shoulder as far as he can recollect, for he was nearly driven out of his senses by the apparition: it had a glass of currant jelly in one hand and a long and tattered ‘bill of fare’ in the other hand.” *Credat Judæus!*

We returned into Chippenham, resigning the horse to its master and the phaeton to its shed; we compared notes over a sunny flask, and reached Oxford by the railway from Chippenham early in the evening. The wind had been restless the whole of the day. The clouds had gathered, and mocked the legendary hills around with sable projection and changeful armament. The new leaf whipped the bending flower stalk, and ever and anon breathings, as if from a mighty furnace of molten brass, alternated with chill instantaneous whiffs of the breeze returning from various points of the doubtful air. Late in the afternoon a famous shower of rain commenced; and it was new, after the drought and fever of the fourteen days past, to see our fellow travellers inhaling the blest air with gratitude, and to hear each in a simple manner say something kind and hearty of the fortunate change. That night we had but short gossip, and a long repose.

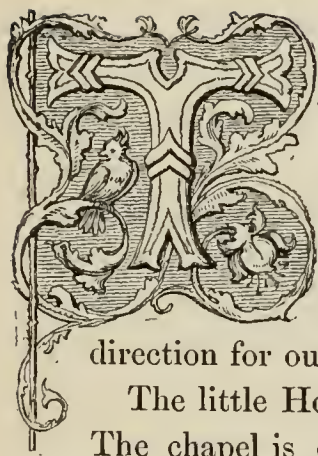
CHAPTER XI.

VISIT TO OXFORD. — HOSPITAL OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW. — SHOT-
OVER. — RESIDENCE OF MILTON'S GRANDFATHER. — HORSPATH.
— TRADITION OF THE CHURCH. — IFFLEY. — ITS INTERESTING
ANGLO-NORMAN CHURCH. — VENERABLE YEW IN THE CHURCH-
YARD. — BEAUTY OF THE VILLAGE. — HINCKSEY. — STATUE OF
QUEEN ELIZABETH. — RETURN HOME.





CHAPTER XI.

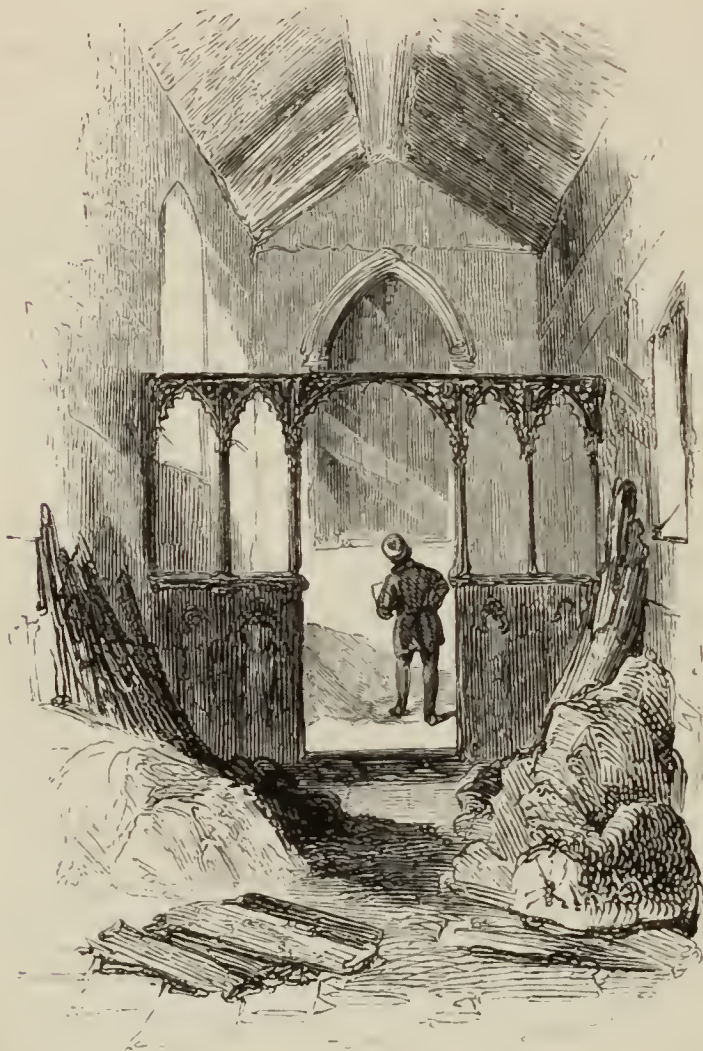


THE next day we visited the colleges, and the Bodleian Library, and gratified ourselves with a supreme bird's-eye view of the grandeur of the classic island from the summit of the Radcliffe Library. We were invited to a fête champêtre in the Iffley Meadows on the afternoon of that 27th day of June, and we made best use of the previous hours by a hasty ramble in that direction for our own peculiar advantages.

The little Hospital of St. Bartholomew was first in our visitations. The chapel is closed, and serves to enshrine all such lumber as the people at the farm chose to throw into it. In the first volume of that lively book the *Oxoniana*, at p. 191. is the following notice: — *St. Bartholomew's Hospital*. About half a mile eastward of this city was the little Hospital of St. Bartholomew, as ancient as the reign of Henry I., and probably founded by that prince when he built his palace at Beaumont (in Oxford). It consisted formerly of a master, who was a priest, two healthful brethren, six infirm or leprous brethren, and a clerk. It being of royal foundation, Edward III. gave it in 1328 to Oriel College, on condition that they maintained in it “a chaplain and eight poor brothers.” I believe that the endowment is now used for “richer and clerical brothers,” whose leprosy is less hideous in the sight of the world than the loathsome disease of poverty. The “poor brothers” of St. Bartholomew, like the patron saint, are pretty well “skinned!” There is a history that pilgrims once frequented this chapel to behold the “*Skin of St. Bartholomew*,” which was here preserved as an invaluable relic. I cannot find any reference to this which indicates the veracity of the statement in the “*Acta Sanctorum*,” or other books I have diligently searched, which usually conclude the biography with mention of those places where the relics are or have been venerated. I am inclined to believe that the object displayed was a mere representation of the original—a piece of pious fancy-work, exhibited very likely upon the anniversary day, or carried in procession to remind people of the mode of martyrdom.

For more of this interesting building, which is near to the city, we advise

the reader to consult the *Monasticon* of Dugdale, where he may find “*Ordinationes pro meliore gubernatione ejusdem*,” and an “*Inspeximus*,” and “*Carta Regis Edwardi Tertii pro receptione unius fratris in eodem hospitali*,” &c. Robert de Stanton was master about 1230. Robert Milcomb was the last master.



Remains of St. Bartholomew.

To the right of the hospital, leading onward to Horspath, is a wide open space of ground, formerly marsh; and here in fine weather the game of cricket is conducted in the best spirit imaginable.

We kept to the road by the side of the hill of Shotover: this is an elevation of great boldness, and the view from the summit is notable for its extent and loveliness. Hence the eye with delight can repose upon the Gothic pinnacles and grey embattlements of the “*Queen of Schools*,” or follow with sense of

fairy bewilderment the wanderings of the Cherwell, and the graceful contour of woods, and gardens, and villas, reposing in the lustre of summer verdure. The hill abounds in minerals and earths. Its ochre is the purest of the kind. There is an ordinary legend attached to its name. An ancient lord of the soil is stated to have refused the hand of his Saxon child to an importunate lover, who was a famous cross-bowman in his service, until from a hovel far from the extreme height, he should be enabled to send his bolt over the hill at a single draw. The lover set his best wits to work, and constructed bolt and bow of such order that the serf put to mark the trial, upon the summit, shouted “*shot over!*” at the first attempt. “*By this*,” say the gossips around, “*he obtained a rich wife, and the hill was called Shotover ever afterwards.*”

The grandfather of the poet John Milton, as we have written, was keeper in his day of the forest land of Shotover. If we may credit Fenton, the ancestors of Milton were of Milton in the hundred of Thame. One forfeited this estate during the wars of the Roses. "The house," says Skelton, the historian of Oxfordshire, "which the family is reputed to have occupied, is now standing; and in size and consequence appears well suited to a gentleman's family of moderate fortune, when that description of gentry were more common than at present. It is built of stone, with pointed roofs, and window frames of the same materials. In the principal parlour the arms of Wilkinson, who afterwards possessed this property, are emblazoned in the window." Milton, the "keeper of Shotover," resided at Forest Hill. Horspath is a village situated on the south side of Shotover Hill, in a picturesque nook of an ascending road. In Dome-Boc it is spelled *Horspadan*. As much as may be said of this church is to be found in Skelton. "The church is a plain Gothic structure of irregular form. Against the wall of the tower, in the nave, are two figures rudely carved in stone; one a man holding a bagpipe, the other a female in the act of devotion. The tradition is, they were two deformed persons who left money to build the tower. In the middle aisle are gravestones, having Saxon inscriptions on their margins; they are, however, much obliterated." Again in note 9.—"In the window near the pulpit is represented in painted glass a taberdar of Queen's College, Oxford, holding a spear, on which is a boar's head." There are many fragments of glass painted with Scripture histories: we illustrate the most remarkable painting above mentioned, because a legend is therewith connected. Taberdars are officers peculiar to Queen's College; and if I am correctly informed their duties appertained to the refectory, or dining hall. One of these students in office, in earlier centuries, was returning home through Shotover Forest after a day spent in some recreation, and for safety against wild things he carried a spear. Jogging homeward leisurely, it pleased him to lull the distance with a page or two of the MS. Aristotle, which he had slung in the folds of his vestment. Thus occupied, and all insecure from foes, biped or quadruped, he was terrified to find that a savage boar was at that instant thrusting itself offensively in his path. The scholar suddenly halted. The boar did likewise. The scholar extended his jaws to raise an alarming cry, and the boar followed the example, pursuing his advantage. The man who could study Aristotle in those days was not likely to be blamed for stupidity. As quick as speech the taberdar thrust the volume, vellum, brass, and all, into the animal's throat, and then finished the business with the spear, whilst his opponent was digesting his classics. The scholar's patron commemorated the event in the windows of Horspath church.

Iffley was to be to us a home for the evening; we therefore made the second visit in our lives to that interesting church. It is one of the most interesting specimens of Anglo-Norman architecture in the kingdom, and is supposed to have been built by a bishop of Lincoln in the twelfth century. It belonged to the prior of Black Monks, at Kenilworth, in Warwickshire; and they presented to it as early as 1217. In the charter of Henry de Clinton, third founder of Kenilworth, the church, and a virgate of land in Cowley, are stated to have been given to the monastery by Juliana de Sando Remigio (St. Remy). The west door, the north and south doorways, the font, and the zig-zag work of the interior, have long been the theme of admiration to those who love ecclesiastical antiquity. In the churchyard is a magnificent and venerable yew tree, and near to it is the shaft of a cross. The roots of the surprising vegetable hero were probably strong in earth when Richard the Lion-hearted was beating down the Paynim chivalry in the Holy Land. Against its vigorous stem the churl perhaps leaned who told his fellow of the dark doings and daily wonders of Master Bacon, the Franciscan friar, in the Norman tower upon the bridge at Oxford; and maybe it shook its old head sorrowfully to the cool October gale, whilst Cranmer, and Ridley, and Latimer, were eating their "bread and ale, and cheese and pears" (as Strype has written for us) in their dismal prison of Bocardo.

"What is the meaning of the word Bocardo, as applied to the Oxford prison?" said I to my companion.

He answered me, "I cannot tell you, else than it might once have been termed appropriately the Prison 'Beau-Garde.'"

The dwellings at Iffley are many of them dainty bowers of delight, and the place titled Rose Hill wants but the stream of Bendemeer, instead of the more intimate Cherwell, to deserve mention from the idol of school girls, the author of "Lalla Rookh." We finished the day with a lusty game at football, amongst the haycocks in the meadow. The syllabubs in the open air were charming. The songs of the night were as cheerful as one could desire, and with a brisk escort of revellers, brimfull of toddy, and sentiment, we returned to our habitation *pro tem.* in St. Giles's, and dreamed more than we shall tell to any one but the ladies at home. The next day was a dull day in Oxford, and until the noon it seemed likely to be dark and drizzly: until evening we had no particular plan to consult, so by mutual consent we went side by side to vagabondise in the Hincksey lanes. To arrive at Hincksey you take the western road out of Oxford; and at Botley, where the roads to Whiteham and Cunnor diverge, you keep a brief turning to the left, and then take

your will between the hedge-rows and the curling streams. We should be regarded as wise owls indeed to offer such instruction to a "pundit;" for Hincksey Ferry House is known afar and wide; and is the Sunday resort of



Hincksey Ferry.

the middling classes, when the weather is bright, and the days are long and blest with congenial sunshine. Merrily, and with gipsy pace, we wandered in the flowery track of those rude pathways; and little children, whose light presence was every where, at the stiles and by the ditches, and weaving the water grass beneath the pale willow trees, became our chief amusement, and lisped for us their names, their pastimes, and all their concise and bashful biography.

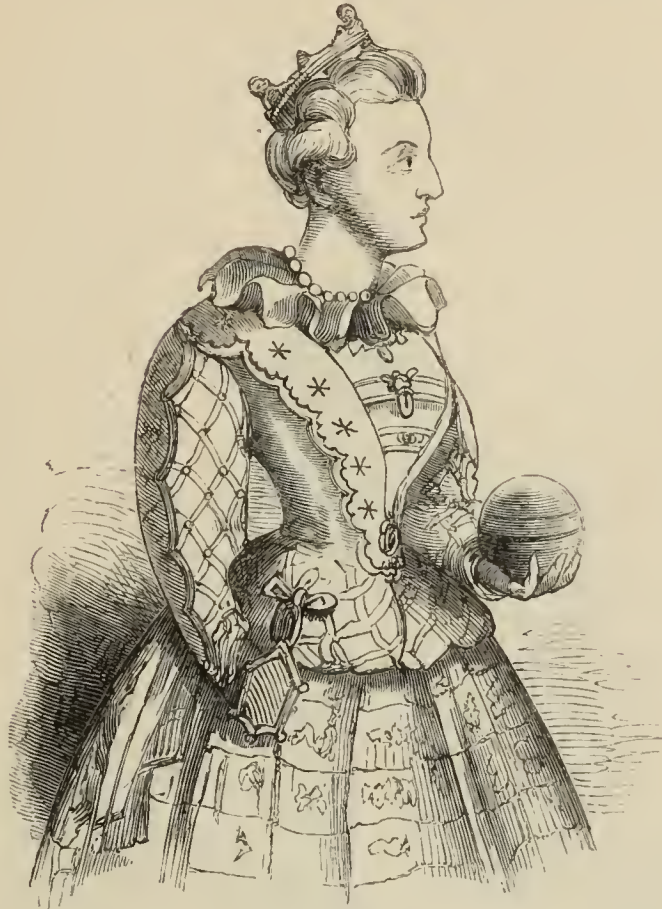
One picturesque group, in the nook of an upper path by the way-side, were under thrall of a fierce chubby-cheeked urchin, who, with early exercise of human bias, manifested her innate fondness for dominion by performing the schoolmistress, teaching her junior playmates the alphabet from broken platters and dock-leaves, and such-like material, which, by the potent spell of young imagination, can at once be converted for the nonce into plates of silver and gold, houses, rich food, and every thing desirable in the

rural drama. In the more retired path is the base, or stool, of an ancient stone cross. Many such, as we before mentioned, are to be found in mutilated condition around Cumnor, and wheresoever the clergy held tenure and dispensation. I think, besides the "point" denoted at such cross-marks for public notices, proclamations, marketings, and limits of property, there was also a more spiritual act contemplated by the erection of the Christian symbol. From this eloquent sign the afflicted heart could derive a thought or an emotion of comfort and endurance, under the more severe visitations and trials of mortal life; and upon this the outcast of his fellow-men — the Cain of the community, the plunderer, the tyrant, or the worker of crime in secrecy — might dwell involuntarily for the moment, and revive the admonitions of better days. We seated ourselves upon the stone relic, and took our sandwich with a gusto which was materially heightened by the beautiful close scenery around; and then the sun, which hitherto had been clouded, enlivened the leaves, and the rippling wave, and encouraged us to renew the perambulation.

Our next halting-place was at the "Ferry House" of North Hinecksey, the ground of which house of entertainment, near to the river, is furnished with every accommodation for enjoyment, *al fresco*. Here we fell in with an intelligent idler, who in a good-humoured sleepy style repeated all the situations of curiosity, historical remembrance, and legendary fame, in that vicinity. At his recommendation we relinquished our cool arbour, and wended our ways to obtain permission, at a farm upon the adjoining hill, to inspect a something remaining of olden sculpture in their simple garden. This we found to be a statue of Queen Elizabeth, according to the sketch. The character of the work is expressive, and the details of the costume are completed in no ordinary manner. Referring to the brief "History of Cumnor," we find that the statue was an adornment at Cumnor Lodge in Leicester's period. Probably it stood in the centre of the quadrangle, and was a complimentary exhibition to royalty by the unprincipled paramour. The displaced monument brings with it no reflection of honour to the "splendid virago" or her minion; it bids us think of murder and its complicated villanies, and give one other sigh for lonesome Amy, in the dull monastic dwelling so very near to it.

We left the mossy dame, carpeted upon sweet garden flowers, and garlanded from knee to lip with sportive briar, and the nodding buds of woodbine and the rose. When we returned to the ferry our comfortable friend was still upon the seat, soliciting the odours of an unexceptionable cigar, and contemplating the outline of his careless limbs. He revived from the bland

stupefaction at our appearance, and recommended a sketch of the "ferry," which, truly, is as pretty a piece of scenery, when imbued with the colour

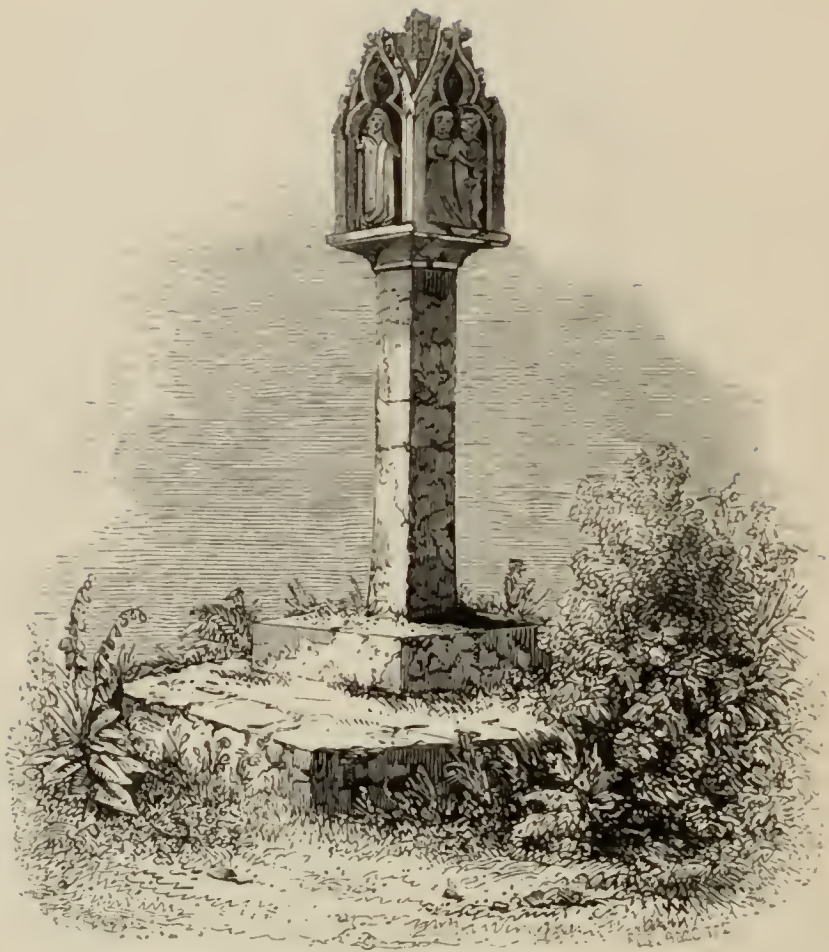


Queen Elizabeth.

of nature as one can think of; showing in our own hurried manner but a fleeting shadow of the fairer form. With due submission to a languid conversation, we stepped into the boat, bidding farewell to the dreamy spirit we left behind us, and, after a charming walk through the hay-fields, arrived at our quarters to receive the information that each must turn the staff homeward, for the time of wandering was past. Early in the still morning we said adieu one to the other, and, for a truth, found Home the only place worth caring for in the wide world beside.

Thus much our next correspondence told, and so much it was earnest to declare until autumn summoned us afield once more, and bid the dusty feet forsake the plain boundaries of the midland for the asperities of a wilder region.

Here the Pen must rest awhile, and the wallet swing cheerlessly upon the oaken screen of our snuggerly, for the measure of our story is yet untold



CHAPTER XII.

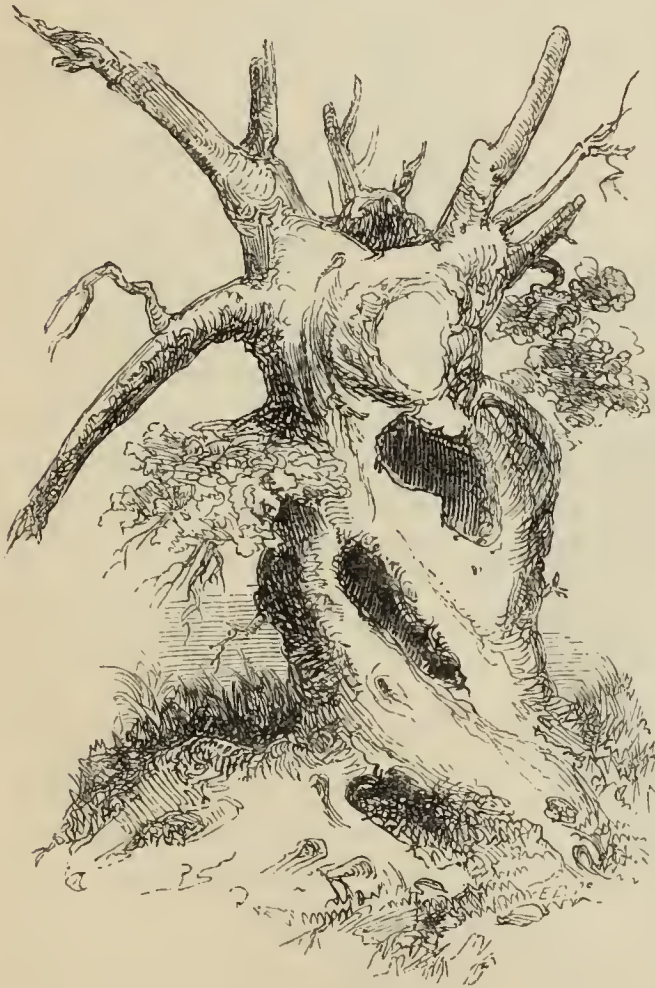
JOURNEY TO LICHFIELD.— WALSALL CHURCH.— THE SHIRE OAK.—
CANNOCK CHASE.— LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL.— DR. JOHNSON'S
MONUMENT.— ANCIENT FOUNDATION.— STOWE POOL.—ST CHAD'S
WELL.— SOME ACCOUNT OF ST. CHAD.— LICHFIELD GRAMMAR
SCHOOL AND ITS FLOGGING HORSE.— RUSHALL CASTLE, FOR-
MERLY THE RESIDENCE OF THE HARPERS.— THE LIME CAVERNS
NEAR TO IT.— ST. CHAD'S CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL IN BIRMINGHAM.
— ST. CHAD'S RELIQUES AND THEIR LEGEND.



CHAPTER XII.



EARLY in the fair autumn time we had resumed the satchel and staff, and, by appointment, were gladly united, and upon our way to the ancient city of Lichfield, in Staffordshire. Our road lay through the town of Walsall, which we formerly noticed. Its lofty church, raised upon the summit of a huge limestone rock (*the bearing out* of those measures from the coal basin), is a beacon to a considerable distance. Through deep and sandy roads, whose banks were rife with lovely tinted heathers and luxuriant wild flowers, and over some detached portions of the renowned Cannock Chase, we arrived in that place early before noon. There is nothing of interest on the road worth mentioning, if we except the decayed "*Shire Oak*," of which we present our sketch to the reader.



Shire Oak.

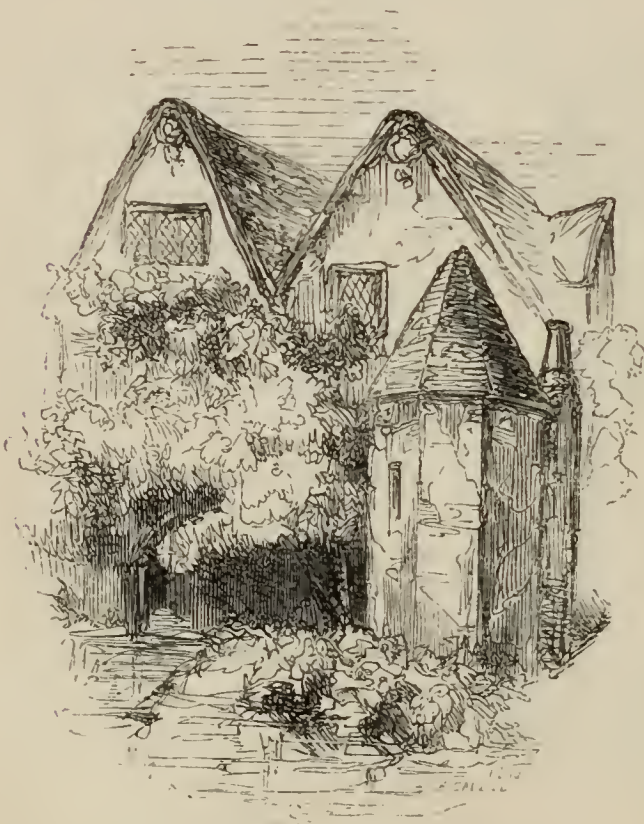
The inhabitants of the vicinity, even some of the well-informed, hold that this is the tree under which Dean Swift coupled the pair during the thunder storm, uniting them in holy bands of matrimony when they were hindered by stress of weather from arriving at the parish church. I cannot agree with this version. I believe the lines

"Under this oak in stormy weather
I tied this," &c.

were uttered in another place; and I do not think his traditional pedestrian rambles from London into Shropshire, through this vicinity, afford much opposition to a prior claim. However, we were assured that two gentlemen put up their carriage

some few years ago at an inn which was pointed out to us from the neighbourhood of the tree, and these worthies cut out some panes of glass in a room the dean was known to have occupied, and our informants declare a composition in the diamond pencilling of the poet's hand existed on the glass. The gentlemen, who took care to insert other panes of glass, were never afterwards recognised.

We have no intention of entering upon the description of Lichfield, nor of describing the grand and unique Cathedral Church, which, for the magnificence of its western porch, is scarcely rivalled. We were, in truth, upon a pilgrimage to *St. Chad's well*; and some few other subjects we noted down which will in no sort of manner prevent the student from a future feeding upon the pages of erudite Shaw, or the memoranda of earlier authors. There is a Priory still to be traced with small portion of interest, save the tombstone with the floriated cross in the wall of the building. The monument to Dr. Sam. Johnson is an affront to him, and the bas-relievs upon the pedestal are grotesque. We repeat our disposition to silence within the boundaries of the town, and leave it towards the north-east, where we noticed some good remains of the *ancient fortification*, to the left hand as you cross



Remains of the old City Fortification, Lichfield.

the meadows towards Stowe Pool, which is nearly half a mile distant. In the narrower part of the garden road is a willow tree, planted where its sire formerly flourished — "*Johnson's tree*," in which he used to swing when a boy, and con his simple task. From habit of body, Master Samuel was passionately enamoured of personal ease. "Fat spaniels," say the experienced, "have tender hides." We were shown a gate belonging to the grounds of a family who patronised the Doctor in his younger days, and in after years. Johnson was so afraid of trouble that, when he had

permission to avoid the longer circuit by indulging in the private road, he would positively climb the wall towards the Stowe church for alarm of the difficulty of opening the gate and closing it again.

Near to the fine sheet of water termed Stowe Pool is an interesting church, in which there are still to be traced some good details in company with a multitude of unsightly deformities. The moulding exteriorly, near to the basement trench which surrounds the edifice, appears of Norman date. The building said to have remained of the original structure of St. Chad was supported by the north side of the present western projection. The entire has suffered a repetition of alterations. Some of the displaced corbels lie in the entrance from the south porch, the arch to which is worthy of notice.

St. Chad's well, here represented, is lower, with regard to its surface, than



St. Chad's Well.

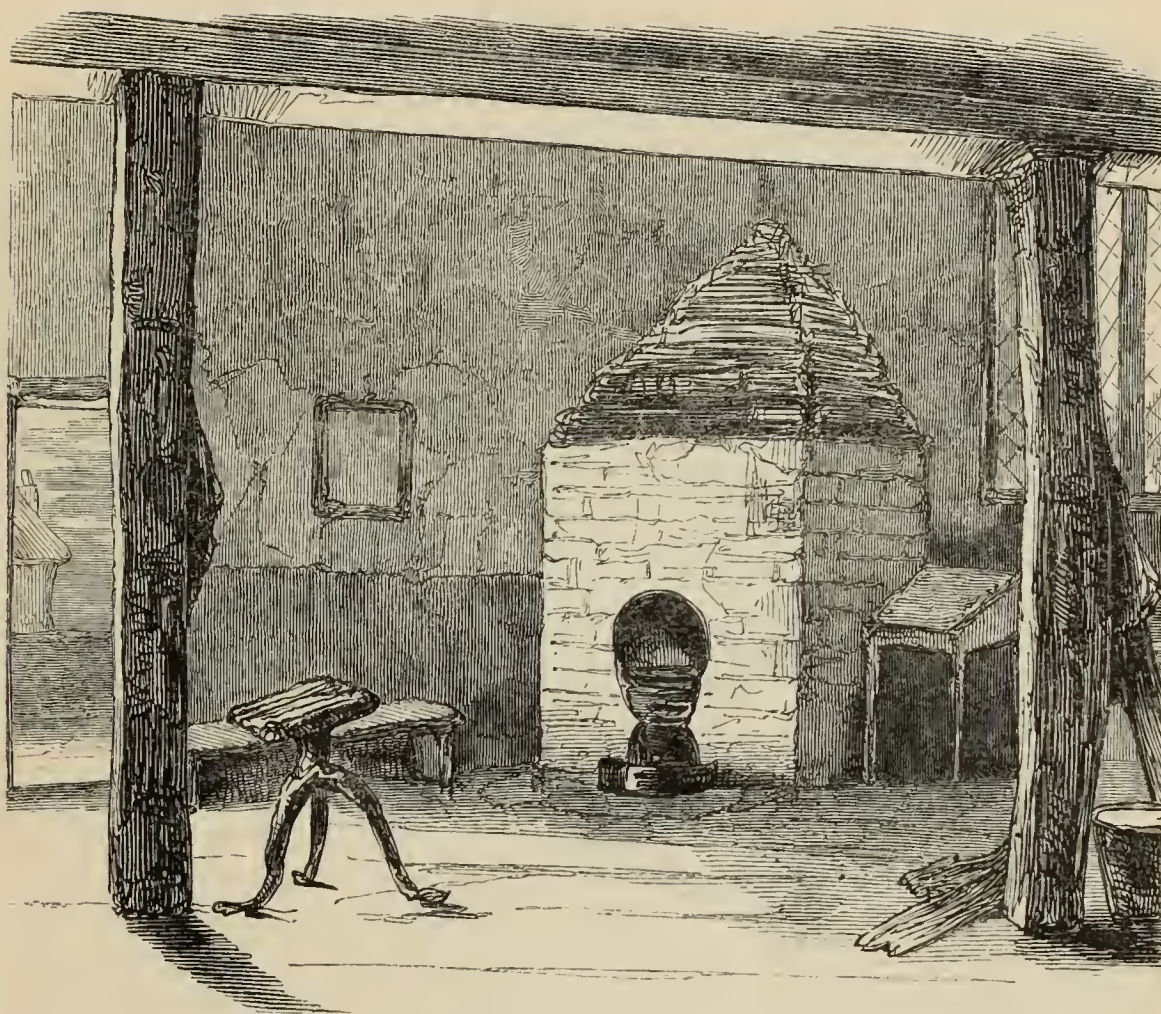
the Church or Pool. It remains in some gardens near to the west end of the church. It is readily known by its present superstructure. The water of the well is sulphuretted, and near to it is a pretty iron pump, giving water from a second well, which is a superfine chalybeate; and a great advantage it would be to invalids of the vicinity if better known by medical recommendation, which it honestly deserves. "In a garden near the churchyard," says Mr. White, "is St. Chad's well, which Leland calls a spring of pure water, 'where is seen a stone at the bottom of it, on which some say St. Chad was wont naked to stand in the water and pray.' At

this well St. Chad had his oratory in the time of Ulphere, king of Mercia." Cedda, or St. Chad, was the great patron saint of Mercia, and brother to Ceddi the priest, who first preached the gospel to the Mercians. He was a person devoted to solitude, and celebrated for his piety. He built himself a bower of green stems near to a well upon his first arrival there, and, as

the traditions say, he was nourished by the milk of a white hind, which remained dearly attached to his holy person. By a chance Wulphad and Rufinus, the sons of the king, chased this animal, which sought refuge in the oratory at Stowe. The young men, who little fancied to behold a human creature in that marshy wilderness, tarried at the good father's request, and were so charmed by his wisdom and amiability that they renewed the visit, and were instructed by their new friend the saint in the principles of the Christian religion. They were converted, and baptized at the well. Werebode, their father's evil counsellor, discovered the fact of their apostasy from the heathen state, and excited the paternal wrath against them. They fled, but were slain at Stone soon afterwards, by the King's order. In due time a reconciliation took place between the saint and the heathen father. St. Chad is said to have then erected a rude church or chapelry, of earth and wood and stone, at the western site of the present Stowe church. Fifty years afterwards his body and that of Ceolred the king were interred in the new church which the bishop Hedda made. Up to the period of the Reformation his body was enshrined in the cathedral church, and the shrine was the daily resort of many pilgrims.



Lichfield School.



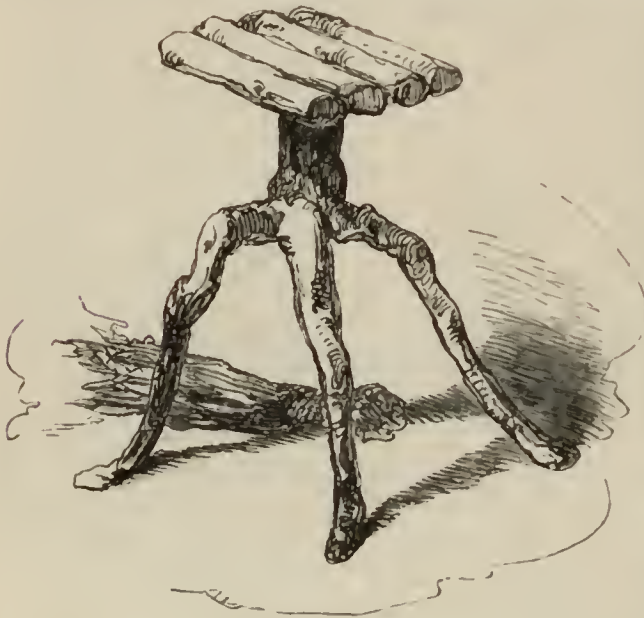
Interior of Lichfield School.

Opening on to the garden in which the wells are situated are three wretched tumble-down cottages of the most beggarly description, which are ludicrously enough designated as the "the Poor-houses!" the joke consisting not in their poverty, but in there being a sum of money for their support and for the provision of tenants, who are now left to weather the storm in the ruins, with a mere alms for their weekly stipend. To us it appeared that an old charity was being gradually extinguished in a very shameless way.

Upon our return from the Chalybeate, we visited, from a worthy curiosity, the free Grammar School of the city of Lichfield, where Addison, Ashmole, Garrick, Johnson, and Woolaston were educated. It is deserving of an illustration. The upper school-room is tenanted by lumber; the lower one is unoccupied. The school is said to have been founded by Edward VI. There is a schoolmaster, who receives an excellent salary; but there are no scholars to absorb his valuable time.

We were guarded away from this hallowed ground with especial care and suspicious inferences. I had mentioned the number of lights in the window casement as an instruction to my companion who was sketching, and the servant became jaundiced to conceive that we were "tax-gatherers," or what they term in Staffordshire "the window peepers!" All our fine sentiment and our passionate soliloquy in that place of visions were abbreviated by this circumstance.

We displayed to our company at the inn (for it was much occupied) the drawing of the rude stool, or *flogging-horse*, which remains in the lower school-



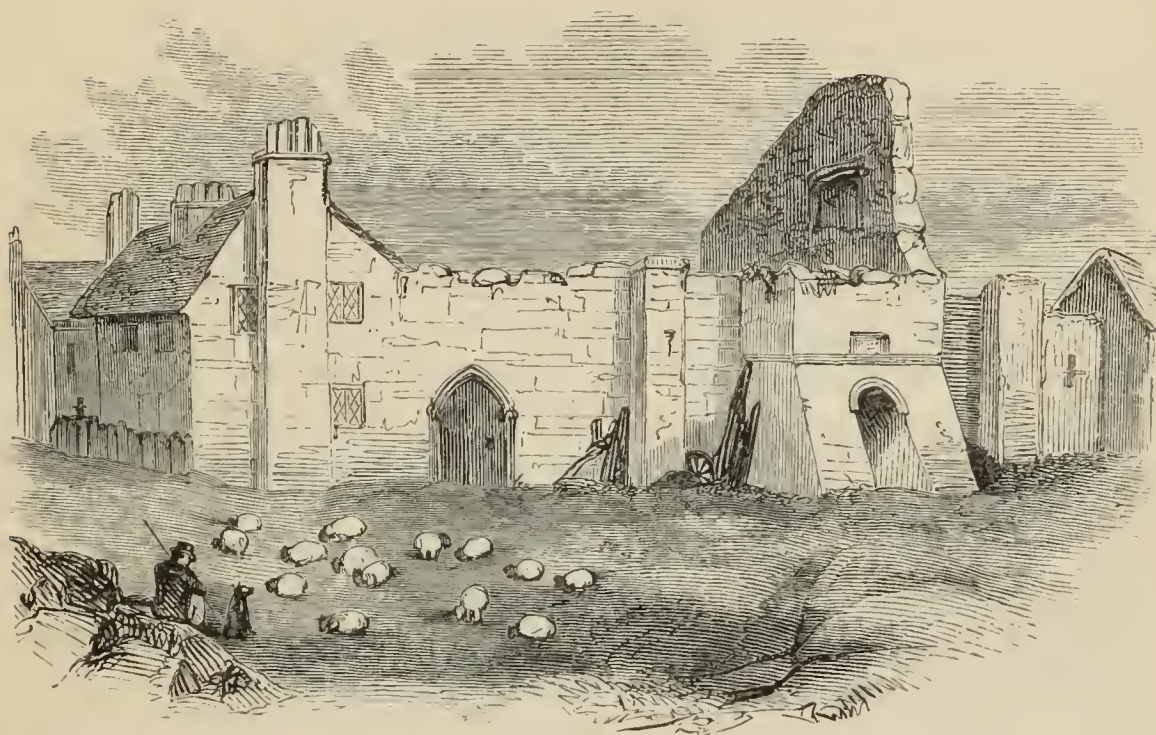
Flogging Horse.

room, and which may probably have rendered, more frequently than once, the young author of the "Spectator" a sore example to other spectators. A facetious personage assured us that the boys at that grammar school were so very studious, that they could not bear to lose their time by such frequent floggings as they endured; and that, owing to the *undeserved* bad name they had given the school, it was now entirely forsaken. How is it the Lichfield Grammar

School is so shamefully deserted? — and what amount is received by the master for doing nothing? *

With a changeful sky, and occasionally a fleet driving rain in our teeth, we again passed our old nodding acquaintance the "*Shire Oak*," and, about a mile from Walsall, turned sharply to the left hand, and inspected *Rushall Castle*, which appears in the rear of the church at a short distance from the main road. In the church there is nothing to repay loss of time. There are fragments of a stone cross or dial in the cemetery. The castle forms a spacious quadrangle within. The main entrance, guarded once by a tower, is at the western side. The residence, still occupied, is against the northern boundary. The embattled walls, in many parts mutilated by time and open violence, are mantled with a sturdy growth of ivy, the rude stems of which

* We suppress something here, of severe application, for the master who presided when we visited the grammar school has recently been gathered to his ancestors.



Rushall Castle.

form natural buttresses to the eastern range. Upon the centre of the lawn, within the quadrangle, is a pile of cannon-shot taken from the ruins. The court-yard is converted into orchard and garden. It was formerly the manorial residence of the “Harpers,” whose arms — “*a lion rampant within a border engrailed*” — adorn the gateway in sculpture of the Tudor period. Captain Tuthill garrisoned this fortress during the civil wars with a considerable force, and strengthened the defences materially. Colonel Leveson was then governor of Dudley Castle for the King’s party. Leveson made the attempt to tamper with the governor of Rushall by agency of one Pitt, a treacherous but influential Puritan of Wolverhampton. The affair proved unsuccessful; the parliamentary general was enraged beyond measure; and rested not until by counterplot he had secured the person of Pitt, who thereupon, and with small waste of moments, was tried at the drum-head, and unceremoniously consigned to the hangman: he suffered in 1640.

The Lime Caverns near to Rushall, at a place called Linley, are worthy the notice of the “geological section” of travellers. They are accessible without any hindrance or delay. This vicinity is, *par excellence*, the lime country; and the operations are carried on by shaft and open work. The material is conveyed to different parts of the country by canals, and much is used as a flux for the iron ore in the adjoining coal district.

Our next day (Sunday) was one of strict retirement and tranquillity. The following morning we examined St. Chad's Catholic Cathedral in Birmingham, and the Bishop's Palace, which is hard by. These are modern buildings, but are built correctly upon the middle-age principles, by that capital architect Welby Pugin, Esq. They contain much ancient carving. The pulpit is of admirable carved work from Germany. The stalls of the choir are specimens of early skill. The bones of the great Mercian saint Ceadda, or Chad, are contained in a coffer or shrine over the high altar. As these may seem doubtful, we had the following legend from the guide:—“When Lichfield Cathedral was plundered of its riches at the Reformation, one of the illustrious family of Dudley served the church there as the ‘Canon Dudley.’” He held St. Chad in much reverence, and in haste removed the greater part of the bones from the shrine, which was sold to one Rowland Lee, by King Henry VIII.

The Misses Dudley (“the ladies Dudley,” as they were called), the sisters of this clergyman, resided at Russell Hall, upon the Himley road, near to Dudley. To this residence, for safety, he removed the relics of St. Chad. After a while (in the course of a few years) pursuivants and others were employed to ransack the dwellings of those who made store of “superstitious things,” as their authority worded it; and in a visitation to Russell Hall



St. Chad's Bones.

many such were discovered, abused, and broken. Those in question were broken, but not removed. To avoid a recurrence of such violence they were handed over to the care of one Hodgetts of Woodsetton, a retired butler or steward, who religiously preserved them. When the “ladies Dudley” died, no

mention was made of the bones, and he retained them; until, at the hour of his death, he disclosed the secret to the missionary priest who was called to see him stealthily, from one of Gifford's chapels, about Chillington, where he lay concealed; and with the priest, by the consent of his brother Hodgetts, a division of them was made. That priest was taken as a recusant, and soon afterwards executed, in the vicinity of London. The possession of the bones of St. Chad was well known to the venturesome Jesuits and other priests, who undertook, at peril of their lives, the charge of the scattered

flock. Tradition said they were afterwards in the custody of Basil Fitzherbert's chaplain, at Swinnerton, near Stone in Staffordshire.

About four or five years since, a Catholic clergyman, removing the altar of his chapel to clean the framework, &c. (I believe it was at Aston, near Stone), discovered a rude chest underneath, with a rough cord banded round, as if for convenience of raising it. This being opened, a rich box, of velvet-covered work, with silver hinges, locks and bands, was seen. None of the keys of the family bundle could open it. The hinges of the box were removed, and the bones of St. Chad appeared with other parcels of relics, as per label declared. The priest hushed his housekeeper, who was present, to secrecy, and replaced them, merely considering he had disturbed some relics of saints, without clearly knowing to whom they appertained. Time after this, the priest having business at Lichfield, could not refrain from betraying the secret to the learned and venerable Father Kirk, of that mission, and Father Kirk was the friend to whom the celebrated Alban Butler had bequeathed his MS. collection.

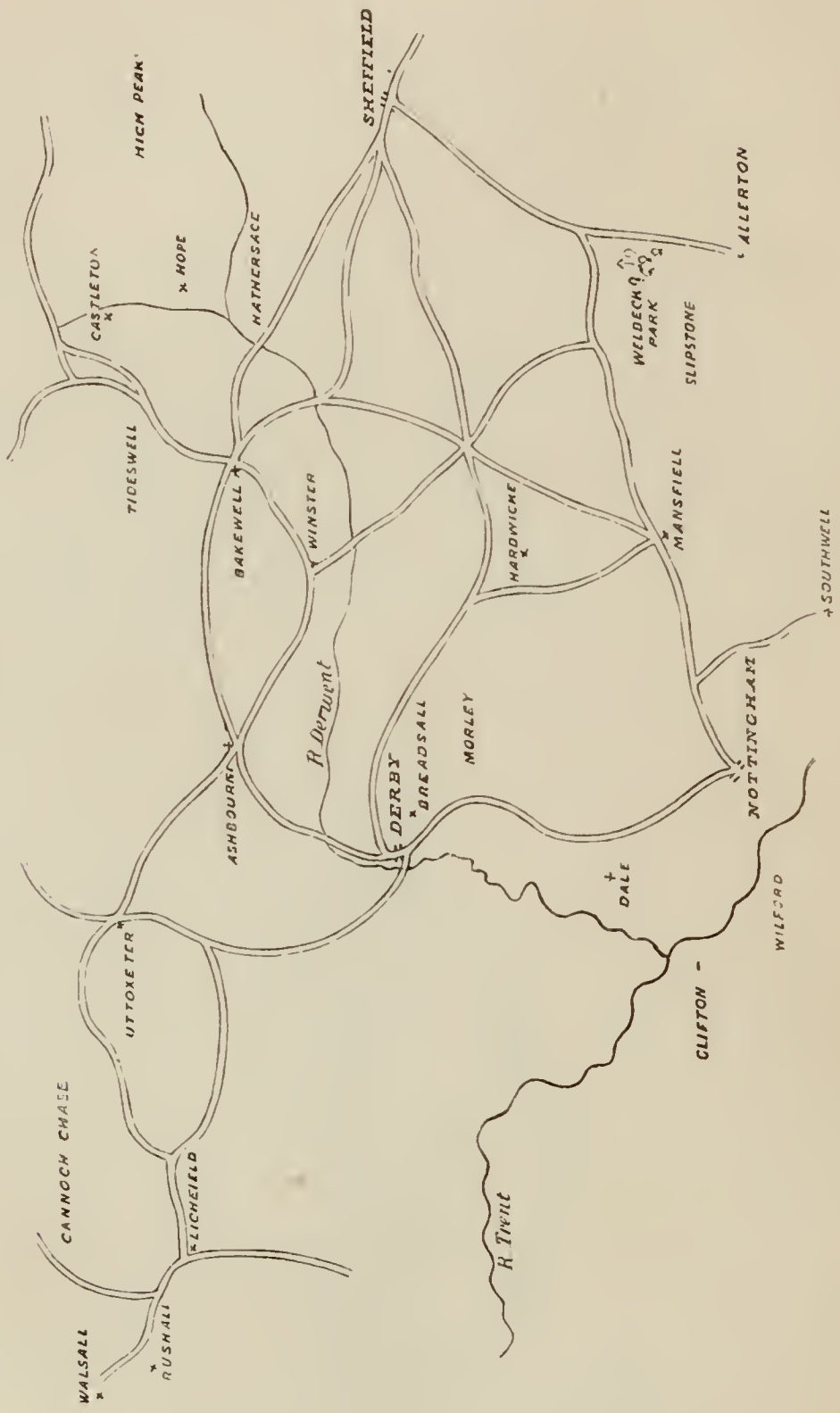
Upon comparing past information, and divers suggestions, recently made, it was concluded the lost bones of St. Chad were regained; and in a scrutiny afterwards it was found that with the bones there were copies of all original evidence in the box with the several fragments. These originals, it was averred, had been inspected by Alban Butler; and because they were half illegible, and rotten, were replaced by attested fac-similes. From those evidences it seemed that they had been examined by Butler when he visited the Fitzherberts. Some of the other relics were described as having been given to an ancestor, Basil Fitzherbert, on occasion of his visit to Rome. To make a long story brief, the Catholic bishop at Oscot claimed the "Treasure Trove," and after some demur it was resigned. The usual court of inquiry was held at the college, before the dignitaries of that church in England. Copies were taken of the evidence from all parties called forward as witnesses. The traditions of the vicinity, which were remarkably indicative of a correct case, were held in consideration. The proceedings were then transferred to a second tribunal at Rome; and, after much discussion, by churchmen and professed antiquaries of both countries, it was held that they were assuredly the bones removed from St. Chad's shrine by Canon Dudley. At the opening of the cathedral in Birmingham, they were installed with a solemn procession. Let them be the bones of saint or warrior, as antiquaries we should reason by the evidence. I have since had correspondence with Monsignore Hulme, who discovered them; and I have personally proved the existence of "Hodgetts" of Woodsetton at the present

time. An old dame from Sedgley pointed out to me the foundation of a house recently destroyed. It stood in a garden by the road side. I inquired if she remembered any thing of those people, and she said, —

“ When she was a young woman she used to see ladies and gentlefolks go there betimes, to see old furniture and odd things as they had in their family.”

Probably these were gifts treasured from the Dudley family for full two hundred years. The members of the Hodgetts' race are very poor and in hard service; the furniture has been sold. Such is the legend: and to me the case seems worthy of notice and further inquiry. There are numerous Catholics who oppose the evidence (to my own knowledge), but they have learnt little of these particulars. Altogether I have gone into particulars, because a visitor to the cathedral might lose sight of the shrine, and the bones therein contained. The other moiety of the bones is lost; and it was to find a clue to such corroborative proof that I visited Woodsetton, with one who well knew the district and its queer inhabitants.





CHAPTER XIII.

DERBY.—REMAINS OF A MONASTIC INSTITUTION THERE.—THE PRETENDER'S OCCUPATION OF THE TOWN.—BREADSALL CHURCH AND MANOR HOUSE.—THE PRIORY OF BREADSALL.—STONE CROSS AT MORLEY.—THE FAMILIES OF MORLEY AND SACHEVERELL.—MORLEY CHURCH.—THE LEGEND RELATIVE TO THE CHURCH.—DALE HERMITAGE AND CHAPEL.—BAKEWELL. ROMANTIC BEAUTY OF THE MILLER'S DALE.—OUTLINE OF "THE PEAK." —TIDESWELL.—THE CHUBCH AND ITS REMARKABLE TOMBS.—THE EBBING AND FLOWING WELL.—STUKELY ON THE PEAK.—THE CASTLE OF THE PEAK.—CASTLETON AND THE CAVERN OF THE PEAK.—PEVERELL OF THE PEAK.—CASTLETON CHURCH.—BLUE YOLM MINE —THE ORGAN.—MAM TOR.—THE ODIN MINE.—THE DHILD AT THE WHEEL.—CASTLETON CASTLE.—VILLAGE OF HOPE.—THE CHURCH.—HATHERSAGE ON THE HOE.—TOMB OF THE EYRE FAMILY.—TOKENS OF AFFECTION TO DECEASED FRIENDS.—LITTLE JOHN'S BURIAL PLACE.



CHAPTER XIII.



ARLY in the afternoon we took train to Derby, where we hastily refreshed with an intelligent friend, and then reviewed the locality. What Stukely mentions to have existed of Derwentium, or Little Chester, has for most part disappeared. We saw the remains of the monastic institution at the foot of the great bridge over the Derwent, and by permission of the proprietor, H. Mozley, Esq., who courteously acted as “cicerone,”

we saw the interior of the *Pretender’s House*, at the bottom of Full Street. This is the residence mentioned in a popular history, which says,—“The young Pretender took up his quarters at a house in the town belonging to the Marquis of Exeter. His artillery, consisting of thirteen pieces, was stationed upon Nun’s Green; his troops were dispersed through the town, and amounted to nearly the number of the inhabitants. Charles entered on foot, with his guards in the dark of the evening (4th December).” According to a native of Derby, “he was tall, straight, slender, and handsome; dressed in a green bonnet laced with gold, a white bobwig, a Highland plaid, and broadsword.” “On their first coming to Derby (says the same history) it was judged, both from the measures they took, and from the behaviour of their chiefs, that they were still disposed to march on. In the evening they held several councils of war, in which the debates amongst their chiefs grew too high to be concealed; yet they agreed upon nothing the first night but levying the public money, which they did with the usual threats of military execution, as they had done in all the towns they marched through.” By such doings they contrived to lay hands upon 2500*l.*; and the next day, beating up for volunteers, they obtained three recruits, one of whom, Sparks, the stocking

weaver, was soon afterwards hung for his pains. "The 5th December (it continues) another council was held, apparently more stormy and discordant than that of the preceding night. The Highland chiefs insisted that they had shown no want of alacrity and daring — that they had already run hazards equal to their ardent love for the cause; but that now they could not in common safety go further, and that they ought not, and could not, lead the brave men who followed them to certain destruction. Lord George Murray, now the real commander-in-chief, and the man of most military ability and knowledge, agreed with the chiefs, and told Charles that, as there was no rising among the English, no sign of a descent from France, not one circumstance to encourage their going forward, they must retrace their steps, and get across the border while it was yet time; for, if the Duke of Cumberland should get between them and Scotland, and join Marshall Wade's army to his own, retreat would be impracticable." All this advice was most unpalatable to the prince, but he had no convincing argument to the contrary: "the justice of his cause; the continual aid of Providence; the probable landing of the French in Kent; and the extension of the march into Wales," were all futile reasoning, and in vain. The Duke of Perth, who had taken personal offence against Murray, was the only one who advanced his opinions side by side with those of the Pretender. The poor brave Highlanders meanwhile were ignorant of the real force of the several English armies, which in the aggregate amounted to upwards of 25,000 men. Again, the history we previously quoted: "It is said that Sir Thomas Sheridan, his tutor, and Murray of Broughton, his secretary, at length prevailed over the obstinacy or woful stupidity of Charles, and that he at last sullenly agreed to a retreat."

Some of the Jacobite accounts are against these councils of Derby, which are denied; but Charles himself, in writing, has left proof incontrovertible. According to local tradition, the young Pretender went very little out, and engaged in council or debate nearly the whole of the time he was in Derby. The council chamber was the panelled room of our illustration. In this room are some old portraits, and amongst the rest, a portrait of Prince Charlie, and one of a lady, who has some relation to the story, which we have forgotten. On the morning of the 6th, before daylight, the Highlanders began their retreat from Derby. According to John Hay, very few of them knew that they were marching back; and when the men who had been put in motion in the grey of the morning began to perceive by daylight, from marks they had taken of the road, that they were retreating, there was a universal lamentation among them. Charles, who during the

advance had generally walked on foot at the head of his men, now mounted on horseback; "for his spirit was heavy; he could not walk, and hardly stand, as was always the case with him when he was cruelly used." He rode a black horse, which was said to have belonged to Colonel Gardiner, slain at Preston Pans. They reached Manchester on the 9th. The King of Saxony was visiting Derby the day we arrived, and we found considerable difficulty in procuring a vehicle for the subsequent excursion. At last a worn-out chaise, painted into a paragon of deceitfulness, was offered to us under conduct of a youthful and inexperienced driver; and to these mercies we were compelled to confide ourselves for the evening. Crossing the Derwent, and taking a northerly direction, with fine upland scenery, and spacious views of country enamelled in light and shade to the very eyelids of the western sky, we arrived at Breadsall, which is a picturesque village of a few habitations, about two and a quarter miles from Derby, and just where the narrowing roads and steep ascents give notice of more sequestered localities in the onward path. Breadsall Church is a handsome edifice, with an embattled tower, supporting a spire at the west end. The structure appears to be of the thirteenth century. The adjoining manor-house is worthy of an illustration. We entered the principal apartment on the lower



Old Hall, Breadsall.

range, which is now used as the tavern kitchen. There are traces of carved work and ornamental plastering. A pleasant group of brown faces harmonised with the warm light of the transomed window, and great hazel eyes surveyed our curious operations of inquiry; capacious mouths the while continuing industrious operations upon white bread and cheese, and welcome beer. We observed some strange crockery,

plates, mugs, and jugs, upon the oaken range. Several of these were dated in old character; and one was ornamented with a true portraiture of Queen Anne, a relic of her glorious reign. Near to the porch some happy children were sporting upon the mound, at the roots of an aged walnut-tree; and the shrill laughter of the urchins was the only sound which disturbed the balmy silence of the placid hour. It was the time so beautifully paraphrased in

Gray's poem (he was an Italian reader) from Dante's eighth canto of "Purgatorio."

"It was the hour when fond desires
 Soften the heart of those who roam,
 The day they wish'd sweet friends adieu ;
 And the new pilgrim grieves in love
 When the shrill evening bell afar
 Sounds like the grief of dying day."

Free Version.

The Priory of Breadsall is farther upon the road, and is bounded near to the highway by a skirting of rugged heath land. It lies three miles north-east of Derby. At this place was a priory of friars hermits, *temp.* Henry III. It was converted afterwards into an Augustine priory. The manor was given, by Ulfrie Spot, a favourite of King Ethelred, to Burton Abbey. In the days of King Edward the Confessor it was held by Siward; and at the compilation of Doomsday Book it was held of Henry de Ferrars, by Robert: it was then written *Braideshale*. At the dissolution of religious houses it was valued, clear annual income, 10*l.* 17*s.* 9*d.* No one but a prior remained in the house then. In the work "Hierologus" (Neale's "Tour to the Ancient Churches of England") it is stated, the old religious occupants, the Augustine monks, were ejected in 1553. The writer follows Sir Henry Spelman in his "History of Sacrilege," who names Breadsall as one of the houses of the church-folk inhabited by laymen after the Reformation began, and as having felt the scourge of Divine wrath by its frequent and unfortunate change of hands. "The property here," says Neale, "was a curse to every subsequent possessor." Henry, duke of Suffolk, was the original grantee, and was beheaded for treason: and before the commencement of the present century it had passed through the hands of twelve different possessors. Little appearance of the ancient building is left. The family were absent, or we might have carried our inquiry into the lower apartments of the residence. The celebrated Dr. Darwin died here, April 18th, 1802.

Soon after we left the grounds we were lost, partly by misdirection, and mainly through the stupidity of our conductor, in the offshoots of the highway; and we had no alternative but to remain patiently in expectance, and to admire the rubbishing old stone farm-houses which variegated the purlieus of our sandy labyrinth.

After considerable delay we found our course to Morley, which is four miles from Derby on the north-east, and there we rested the sorry beast, whose noisy lungs gave clear intimation of an inveterate asthma, requiring better treatment than usually fell to the portion of such invalided quadrupeds.

The pillar of a stone cross stands at the entrance to the churchyard, above the road. Formerly it was in the road, and was the market-cross when the village was better inhabited. Towards the west end of the church there is an isolated gateway in ruin. Eastward of the church, but adjoining to it, is the residence of the Rev. J. Fox, the clergyman of Morley, whose charitable dispositions are best known amongst his worthy congregation. Morley was given by the same Ulfric Spot to Burton Abbey. In Domesday Book it is described as one of the manors of Henry de Ferrars. In 1235 the manor of Morley and Smalley (its chapelry) were held by the abbot of Chester, of the fee of Hugh, earl of Chester. Not long after this we find a family of the name of Morley holding it, probably under the abbey of Chester. Goditha, heiress-general of Morley, who re-edified the church, brought it to Ralph Statham, who died in 1380. The heiress of Statham brought it to John Sacheverell, who was slain at Bosworth Field. Robert Sacheverell, the last heir male, died 1714: then it passed into the hands of the Bateman and Sitwell families.

There is an almshouse at Morley, founded by Jacintha Sacheverell, for six poor men, who receive annually 5*l.*, charged on the Fosbrook estate. The Sacheverells were a family who came over, armed, with William of Normandy, to share the spoils of victory. Thierry, in his fascinating "History of the Norman Conquest," describes them and their fellows as "men who passed the seas with the quilted cassock and black wooden bow of the foot-soldier, and who astonished the new recruits who came after them, being mounted on a war-horse, and bearing the military baldrick." In another place of the same theme: "He who had crossed the seas a poor knight, soon lifted a banner, and commanded a company, whose rallying word was his own name." These were the *herdsmen* of Normandy, and the *weavers* of Flanders. Thierry gives their titles, &c.: "Mandeville and Dandeville, Bouteville and Estouteville, Mohun and Bohun, Cœil de Bœuf and Front de Bœuf, Guillaume le Charretier, Hugues le Tailleur, Guillaume le Tambour." He supposes, with good idea, that as the original name of the Sacheverells stood, it signified the agility of the prime ancestor bearing it, viz. "Du Saut du Chevreau." Such were the men who "came over with the Conqueror," and whom their knightly and coronetted descendants, oblivious of the greasy smock-frocks and vulgar cheeks of their ancestors, stupidly regard as the demi-deities of those rascally times.

In the east window of the church is a figure of St. Ursula, crowned and glorified; and, beneath her, two angels holding the virgin in a fall of drapery, with this on a label —

"S^{ca} Vrsula cum xi. Mill. virginum ascendens in Cœlum."

This of course refers to the marvellous history of that saint and the eleven thousand virgins her companions, who crossed the seas with her, and were slaughtered by the barbarians. Under an arch on the south side of the chancel is an altar tomb, with a slab of Purbeck marble. On this are the effigies of a knight in armour of the fifteenth century, between his two wives, engraved on brass plates. Over his head is a figure of St. Christopher: over the ladies' heads are figures of St. Mary and St. Anne, with inscriptions setting forth they were the daughters of Langley and Cursons. This is the tomb of Thomas Statham, who died in 1470. Under an ornamented arch, on the south side of the chancel, is an altar tomb engraved with brass plates, and effigies of Henry Statham (1481) and three wives. In the chancel of the same church is a grave-stone inlaid with brasses, representing a man in plate armour kneeling upon his helmet. His lady wears a long gown and head-dress. The labels from these praying figures contain invocations to St. Christopher, and notices of John Statham and his wife Cecily, who gave three bells to the church, and alms to the poor yearly. He died in 1454; she in 1444.



Tomb in Morley Church.

The Babington monuments in the chancel are interesting specimens of painted costume; and the brasses on the floor of the church, and the painted glass, are deserving of close attention.

The great attraction of Morley Church is in the painted glass, which fills four windows occupying nearly the whole of the side of the north aisle. There is much mutilation and misplacement of the subject. The whole refers to a legend appertaining to Dale Abbey, whence the glass was stolen, or privily obtained, soon after the Dissolution. The party who conveyed it to Morley is said to have suffered grievously by mulct for his illegal transfer. The legend may be curtailed thus:—When there were canons at Depe Dale (or Dale), a fierce contention sprung up between themselves and the foresters thereof, who disputed possession of the soil, and by their numbers and hardihood severely harried the brothers of the monastery and their feeble dependants. When the grievance had produced the height of confusion and insubordination, the principal of the establishment applied to the King of

England for relief in his necessity. The King wished to observe semblance of piety and a conformity to justice; but in his heart he loved the forests and the foresters, and the good fleet deer under their surveillance, as well as ever did "the red king" so celebrated in the south of the country. So the foresters and the monks were summoned together before the King; and he thus expressed his royal will and commandment, "that the abbot and his *confrères* should have, as a free grant, so much land in the forest of Depe Dale as they could plough with a couple of stags between one sun and another. The stags were to be captured in the same forest by the religious brethren." Here was a puzzle. The stags were to be caught: just what "Mrs. Glasse" would have said. And who could ensure the stags remaining so docile as to plough a single furrow? "Well! good St. Robert, who lived here and there according to season—sometimes in his lodge at Knaresborough, and sometimes farther a-field—happened to be wearing out his reverend sandals in rocky Derbyshire just at that time, and heard the statement of the matter as both parties returned from the Court of King's Bench, wherever it might have been held. He put the business perfectly to rest. No sooner did his footsteps fall in the forest glade, than, at his bidding, two fine stags with lordly antlers obeyed his summons to the day's servitude. St. Robert harnessed them to the plough, to the joy of the religious at Dale; and with the blessings of Holy Church they began the unwonted task, and never desisted until St. Robert, with an impartial discretion, encircled so much ground as the friends of the community absolutely required for the subsistence of the Abbey and the creatures thereunto belonging. The foresters made ample apology, and were afterwards pious beadsmen of St. Robert, and clients of the hospitable Fathers in the Dale." Under one of the compartments of painted glass at Morley is this inscription, which seems to refer to the royal edict:—

"Go whom (home) and yowke them, and take y^e grounde t^t ye plooe."

I fancy it means that they should go home again, and possess such ground as the plough encompasseth. Under another is—

"Here Saynt Robert plooyth wyth the" - - - - (deer?)

Upon leaving Morley our conductor was obliged to confess the inability of his horse to proceed beyond an ordinary pace. At twilight, after passing through the lonesome village of Stanley, and making all sorts of gyrations in the crooked lanes, we came in sight of the grand arch which is the only relic of the monastery of Dale. It stands at the rear of some cottages in meadow ground, and eloquently reads the story of occupants departed, and of the

ruthless violence of utilitarian generations, — men who made purses of their hearts, and coined their fellow-creatures into gold.

The illustration accompanying this is *Dale Hermitage*, a perfect specimen



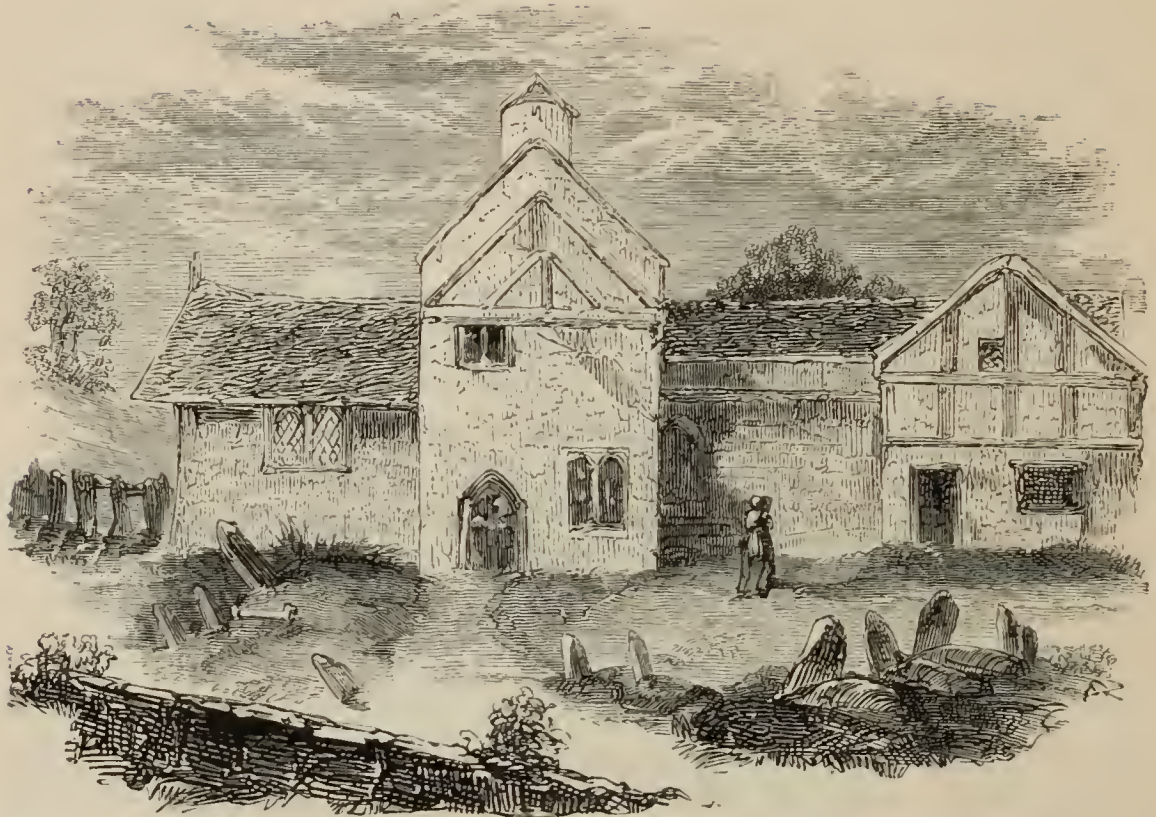
Dale Hermitage.

of that kind of hermit architecture: it exists upon the side of the hill at the off side of the grotesque village. Stukely remembers it in his “Itinerary.” Tradition and record prove that it was originally occupied by a baker of Derby, who for some years laboured in its construction. He had an especial call from the blessed Virgin, in a vision, to spend the remainder of his life in solitude and holy exercises. Perhaps this was awarded to him as a penitential infliction and compensation for fraud to the hungry poor; but, as my companion observes, “he was not a *modern baker!*”

Ralph Fitz Germund, lord of Ockbrook, in whose woods the hermitage was built, discovered it, whilst hunting, by the smoke which curled through the trees, as the solitary burnt his few withered sticks and cooked his lenten

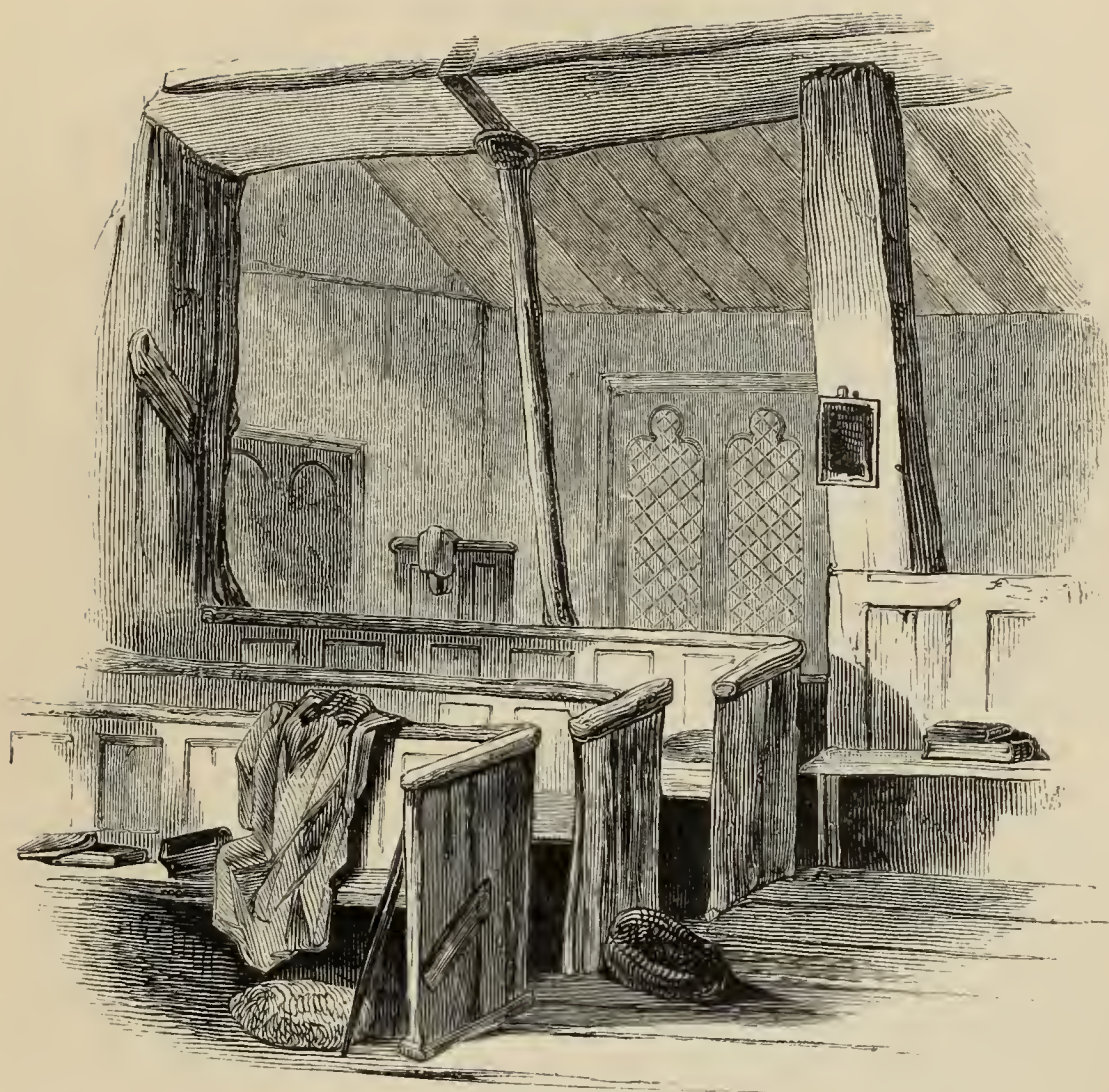
meal. Moved with compassion at the starved and haggard look of the hermit, he gave him the site of the hermitage, and the tithe of his mill at Burgh in Burrowash, for his support. Serlo de Grendon, who married Fitz Germund's daughter, gave Depe Dale to his godmother. Afterwards, with her consent, he invited canons from Calke, and gave it to them. These canons were offensive to him and the people, and were removed for the Premonstratensians, who received the park of Stanley in addition, whence the monastery was called "De Parco Stanley." These canons soon discovered they had not enough to live upon, and they dismissed themselves. Canons from Welbeck then attempted economy on the same foundation. These also failed and departed. Geoffrey de Saucemere (*de Salicosa mare*), and his wife Maud, granddaughter to William Fitz Germund, procured canons from Newhouse in Lincolnshire: these were admitted into the Premonstratensian order, and met with liberal benefactors, who gave them lands of value and the advowson of Heanor Ilkeston and Kirk Hallam. The last endowment took place 1204. The abbey was surrendered by John Staunton the abbot, and his sixteen monks, in 1539. One Francis Pole took possession of the site and demesne as lessee under the crown, and purchased the altar, the crucifix, organ, gravestones, and all the live and dead stock. It has since gone through many hands, and is now the property of Earl Stanhope. Dr. Stukely (*Iter. iii.*) has these words:—"There are some few ruins of Dale Abbey, seated in a valley, and the east end of the choir, o'ergrown with ivy: the mullions of the windows are knocked out (I suppose for the sake of the iron) it is o'erlooked by a near and high hill, covered with oaks. In the ascent out of the rock is cut a cell or little oratory, called the Hermitage, on one side the door and windows: at the east end a square altar, and a step up to it of the same quarry, little niches cut in the wall, and a bench to sit on all round."

Thomas de Musca (Offly, or Offley?) wrote a chronicle history of Dale Abbey, of which house he was some time a canon. This chronicle is very curious, and contains just as many chapters as there are letters in the author's name. He begins by a free panegyric of Brother Thomas and the Abbot John, who, he says, were lights of the order in those days: "*Ut Lucifer et Hesperus in cardine cœli.*" They were, he says, "Cœnolite worthies, dwelling before the Lord without any strife, bearing the splendid vesture of all virtues, having the aspect of angels, fervent in mutual charity, and devoutly serving the Lord Jesus Christ, whose excellence was not to be expressed even by the tongues of Virgil or the mighty Homer." He says that he had been received four years into the community when the noble lady Matilda of



Dale Church.

Saucemere (*Salicosa maris*), foundress of the church, came to them from Lyndesay, being old and full of days; and she, knowing that the time of her earthly decay was soon at hand, commended herself to the suffrages of the brethren, and related to them the incidents and traditions connected with the foundation, of which we take the following, contained in the Third Chapter, entitled — *De Pistore facto Heremita primo inhabitatori Loci de Depedale*: — “Listen,” she said, “to the words of my lips, my beloved children, and I will relate to you a fable or legend; but truly no fable, but a thing certainly accomplished. There lived in the town of Derby, in the parish of St. Mary, a certain baker of bread, a man of order and esteem. There was then a considerable parish to this church of St. Mary; and attached to it, and subject to the same, was the lesser church, called *Overe*. The baker, who moreover was called Cornelius, was a religious man, fearing the Lord, and much intent upon alms and good works; so that, out of his weekly gains, upon the sabbath-day he always brought a considerable gift for St. Mary’s church, and for the poor and afflicted, reserving in the whole just so much as provided himself with food and clothing, and the necessary articles of household. He lived in this good manner for several years, dear to God, and accepted by him; for it



Interior of Dale Church.

pleased God to have perfect proof of his excellence, and, having proved him, to give to him a glorious reward. Now it fell out, that upon a certain day in autumn, when he was sleeping in the daytime (at the meridian), as such of his trade are used to do (working oftentimes by night), there appeared to him in his slumber a vision of the blessed Virgin Mary, and she said to him, ‘ Before my son Jesus and myself your alms and good deeds are well accepted : but now, if you desire to live a perfect life, relinquish all your possessions of the world, and hie thee to *Depedale* ; and there you may serve the Lord my son, and me, in a solitary life ; and when happily you have finished your mortal pilgrimage, you shall see the brightness and beauty of heaven, and the felicities of eternity, which the Almighty himself has prepared for those who love him diligently.’ He, awaking from slumber, and being fully sensible of the Divine goodness exercised towards him, and rendering thanks

to God and the Virgin, who was the chaste embassadress of the consolation, left his possessions, and wandered far and about, seeking silently to find where the place might be which was destined for his reception and solitude. One day ambulating towards the eastern part of the country, when he was tarrying to rest in the village of Stanley, he heard a certain matron say to her child, ‘Take these calves with you, and lead them into the ‘Depedale,’ and be hasty in your return!’ The good baker hearing these words, I say, and admiring the providence of God, and thinking it to be as it were the voice of heavenly inspiration, was much astonished, and drawing near to the matron, ‘Tell me, good dame,’ he said, ‘where is the *Depedale* of which you were speaking to the child?’ And she answered, ‘Go with my little girl, and she will show it to you speedily.’ When he arrived at Depedale, he found it to be a wide and terrible marshy place, far from all human habitation: so turning, he went more to the south-east of it; and there, under the side of a hill, he dug out for himself a hermitage, with an altar to the east (preserved to this day); and there night and day he served the Lord, in hunger and thirst, in cold and meditation.

“CAP. IV. — DE DECIMA MOLENDINI DE BURGO DATA HEREMITÆ.

“But a certain potent lord, of the name of Radulphus, the son of Geremund, was at that time lord of the moiety of the lands of Okebrook, and of Alwaston (cum soka). Once, when he returned from Normandy into England, it pleased him to make a visitation of his lands and woods of chase: so for sport he gathered hounds together, to have hunting; and, attended with a great retinue, he rode away into the woods of Okebrook, and drew near to the hermitage tenanted by the religious servant of God; and he beheld the smoke ascending from the cave of retreat; and he watched it with indignation, and asked, who with such bold front had dared to make a mansion in his forest without a particular licence to do so?— and going hastily forward, he found there a man wretchedly clothed in rags, and in the undressed skins of beasts; and when he had learnt from Cornelius wherefore and whence and for what purpose he had made himself an inhabitant there, and the truth had been told with simplicity, Radulphus the son of Geremund felt compunction of heart, seeing the miserable nature of that solitary being, and he made a grant of the place to him, and gave to him the tithe of the mill of Burgh for his sustenance; and from that time to the present the tithe hath remained to the brother serving God in the solitude of Depedale.”

Thus far the words of our lady Matilda: others there are, which may be found in appropriate places. Chapter VI. treats of “the Vision of the Cross,

made to Uthlage, sleeping upon the hill called Lyndesyke," at the east portal of the monastery. This is a singular document. Chapter VII. is of "the noble matron who was called "Gomme of the Dale," (Gamme, or Gammer?) and Richard, her son. The other chapters are equally interesting.

The Chapel is a remarkably odd-looking piece of building. It has been connected with a small public-house: perhaps it may be so at the present date. It is very ancient, and as rude as possibly can be.

It was dark by the time we left the Hermitage, and we had only taken a glance of the Chapel on our way. Determined not to lose a sight of the interior, we gave sixpence to a little crooked dame to fetch a light from her mother's lamp at the adjoining cottage. By a heap of stairs, like those of a tumble-down granary, we ascended to the gallery of the sacred place, because the key of the chancel was mislaid. Inside, it was like the upper stories of a haunted dwelling of past centuries, — timber-propped, gabled, cross-beamed, cobwebbed, narrow, and obscure. I doubt if daylight could do more for it than our bulky candle in the hands of the astonished guide. The chair or pew for the Stanhope gentry is a something remarkable in church furniture.

With infinite regret we arrived at our vehicle unsatisfied; and with many delays, incident upon a jaded horse and a thirsty chaise-driver, we reached our lodgings late in the evening, much contused by the sides of the rickety conveyance, and the ascents and declivities of a detestable road. By eleven o'clock of the succeeding day we were at Bakewell, having travelled northward about thirty miles in a plentiful fall of rain. There, after a hurried meal, we recommenced our pedestrian exercises, journeying to Ashford, with magnificent hills to the right; thence to the Bull's Head tavern by Longstone, where we received directions for the course; from which deserted-looking home we descended into the supreme and romantic beauty of the "Miller's Dale" by Cressbrook, flanked by the seeming fortresses of projecting stone aloft, which are worthy to be the defences of brigands, or the citadels of vengeful Belochees: and on we pressed, new grandeur and variety captivating us at every measure of distance, till we rose wearied from the deep valley to the rude eminence, where we halted to hail the dim outline of the Peak scenery still farther northward, and to refer to our note-book for the few interesting places on the nearer extent of broken landscape. The heat of the day became renewed as we advanced; and resting only for a short time in the cheerless village near Tideswell, we betook ourselves to the latter place, which had a more agreeable aspect for the wayfarer.

Litton, the previous village, is a cold, solitary, bare, and ochrey dwelling-

place, and reminds one of the views of a wilderness with one bare tree, and a few cubes of melancholy stone building in the foreground, such as in sad "sepia" used to adorn the walls of our school infirmary.

Tideswell is situated in an abrupt hollow from the highway. Entering it from Litton you look down upon the church and its towers and pinnacles, and upon the clustered houses. The population is about two thousand: the common folk are chiefly employed in mining.

Tideswell Church is a building of the fourteenth century, much ornamented at later periods. It is a handsome edifice, with an embattled tower supporting a spire at the west end. The entire plan is cruciform. The naves and aisles are separated by clustered pillars and pointed arches. At the west end is a tower, with four embattled turrets terminating in pinnacles, and ornamented with crockets, &c. The altar-piece is of stone, enriched with two tabernacles. On each side of the east window, over the altar, is an ornamental niche. The tombs in the chancel are few: the brasses are scanty.



Some specimens of costume in broken sculpture of early workmanship are to be found, by prying into the pews on either side of the chancel arch on the eastern side. Near the altar is the tomb of John Foljambe, son of Thomas, who in 1358 was a principal contributor to the foundation. The arms are on the slab, but the brass inscription and motto have been taken away. There is also a monument of Robert Purseglove, bishop of Hull, who died 1579. His effigy, in pontificals, is upon a slab of black marble, with a tedious inscription in Latin verse. In the centre of the chancel is a raised tomb to Sampson Meverell, date 1462. He was in the service of Lord Audley, Earl of Salisbury, &c., and was knighted in France (where he fought in two battles) by John, duke of Bedford. He was knighted at St. Luz, knight constable. He was afterwards constable in this land, and died in the residence of John Stafford, archbishop of Canterbury.

In the centre of the upper slab are represented the three persons of the blessed Trinity,—the Father, the crucified Son, and the Holy Ghost. The arms at each corner are —

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Blank. | 3. Bend. Six scallops. |
| 2. Griffin rampant. | 4. Griffin repeated. |

Underneath the slab which is supported by a series of rests, and grated in by many iron bars, is the representation in stone of the lean corpse of the knight constable: such was once a favourite funeral conceit; and the church clerks of our day take advantage of this, by informing the credulous visitor that, “they are a goin’ to show ’em the tomb of a man as died wickedly a tryin’ to fast forty days, like our Blessed Saviour.”



Tomb in Tideswell Church.

The ebbing and flowing well near Tideswell, whence the place derives its name, is mentioned in local history. A note in *Camden's Britannia*, — replying fiercely to a note which says, “Of the *wonderful well*, which ebbeth and floweth four times in the space of one hour, or thereabouts,” &c.—has this denial: “As to what he says of the justness of the tides, there is no such thing; for sometimes it does not flow once in two days, and sometimes it flows twice in an hour.” I believe it rarely flows at the present day. A few days since I picked up, in the residence of

a poor person, a clumsy inkstand of pitcher-ware, shaped like the half of a barrel; the spout-like opening was in a projection from the longitude centrally, and level with the bottom. The man told me “it was a good article, only when it had stood on the mantelpiece, warmed by a large fire in the grate, it spirted the ink out, and was very troublesome.” Of course it was well supplied when this occurred. In my opinion, the Tideswell spring is on this principle: the spring, which is the “dip” (comparing it with the ink stand), communicates with a cavity near the surface, which is accurately sealed by nature, excepting at the bottom, where the fluid wells upwards through fine strata. According to the supply, conjoined with the temperature of the air upon the surface of the reservoir, so is the pressure upon the fluid, and so likewise is the ebbing or flowing in the open air.

Returning from the church, where we had been much amused by the pre-

tended learning of the old blind sexton and his wife, who read the black-lettering and Latin inscriptions as if it had been A B C to them (all the while having been well crammed with the sounds for such a number of years, by hearing *other* people read them), we procured, at the George Inn, a light phaeton, and a superannuated driver, who for a consideration was to conduct us over the wilds and the wastes and precipitous causeways to Castleton, between three and four miles distant, immediately under the frowns of the "Peak." We apply the words of Doctor Stukely: "We are now got into the very Peak of Derbyshire, the British Alps, where the odd prospects afford some entertainment to a traveller, and relieve the fatigue of so tedious a road. Now you pass over barren moors, in perpetual danger of slipping into coal-pits and lead-mines, or ride for miles together on the steep edge of a steep hill or solid slippery rock, or loose stones, with a valley underneath, where you can scarce discover the bottom with your eye, which brought into mind that beautiful verse of Virgil,

‘ Saxa par et scopulos et depressas convalles.’

Instead of trees and hedges, they fence in their poor meadows or arable with walls of loose stones picked up from beneath their feet. The extended sides of the mountains are generally powdered over as it were with rocks, streams of water dribbling down everywhere, and now bolder cataracts diversify the romantic scene." It would be vanity in us to attempt to describe scenery such as the Peak scenery, in these hurried pages. We had a sublime gratification in forming our first intimacy with the scaurs and precipices and antres vast and memorable; we drank the inspiration, for health of mind's sake, into our hearts, and the life communicated is still brighter and better for the boon of our pilgrimage. For one who can afford but a brief retirement from the labours of the studio or office of his profession, we prescribe a journey into this land, as in some degree preferable to one in the Welsh mountains, if observed in a fine season. You have no prejudices to contend with, no guttural gargled answer to your earnest request, and in a focus you can delight yourself with so many curiosities of nature.

Our old fish proved a desperate fierce driver; in his threadbare suit of black cloth, with the loose cuffs of his would-be "dress coat" dangling with tattered fringe over his knuckles, he directed the animal he seldom controlled to deeds of desperate enterprise; up hill, or down dale, to him was all the same. The descent along the edge of the precipice into Castleton would alone have procured him a free ticket to Astley's Amphitheatre for the rest of his life. He took us to his favourite inn, and we seasoned the "fee" with a

draught of something “peppery,” as he desired, “to warm his good old nose.” At this inn we found an intelligent landlord, and a man well acquainted with the localities, and every particular of the mining operations. We had but leisure to dine before the sunsetting, and to accompany the “daft guide Sammy” to see the Castle on the Peak, which is too well known to require any introduction from us, as kindred to the production of Sir Walter Scott.



Peveril's Castle, Peak, Derbyshire.

“Castleton,” says Jewitt, “lies at the edge of a fine luxuriant valley, generally called by the name of *Hope* or *Castleton Dale*, which is sheltered by a circular range of mountains, that to all appearance deprives it of all communication with the outer world, leaving no visible outlet except by skirting the bases of the hills in the direction of the little stream that flows to the east, or by climbing the almost impassable fronts of the mountains to the south and to the west. Immediately behind the village to the south, is a very high and steep rock, cut off from another still higher, by a very deep but narrow valley, called the *Cave*, except in one point, where an extremely narrow ridge connects both hills at the very part where the rock forms a

perpendicular precipitous front, towards the west, of nearly one hundred yards in height. In this front is the *Peak Cavern*, and on the very edge of the precipice stand the ruins of Peak Castle. Of these ruins the keep and part of the outer walls are all that remain; in fact it seems as if the whole castle had originally consisted of little more than the keep and an enclosed area, known as the castle yard. The hill on the side of the village is too steep to be mounted except by traverses, or zigzag walks, and these approaches are still traceable." It was by these same traverses and the shoulders of "Sammy," who discoursed largely upon the benefit of having a "good head" for such an ascent, that we gained the level of the ruins, and looked into the dreadful chasms beneath. "Castleton Castle," says another author, "was originally a plain wall enclosing an area of moderate dimensions, with two small towers on the north side, and a keep near the S. W. corner, being a square tower, measuring 38 feet 2 inches outside, and 21 feet 4 inches by 19 feet 3 inches inside the walls." This is believed to have been erected by William Peverel, or Peveril, to whom the manor was given by the Conqueror.

Sir Walter Scott commences thus the first chapter of "*Peveril of the Peak*:"—

"William the Conqueror of England was, or supposed himself to be, the father of a certain William Peveril, who attended him to the battle of Hastings, and there distinguished himself. The liberal-minded monarch, who assumed in his charters the veritable title of Gulielmus Bastardus, was not likely to let his son's illegitimacy be any bar to the course of his royal favour, when the laws of England were issued from the mouth of the Norman victor, and the lands of the Saxons were at his unlimited disposal. William Peveril obtained a liberal grant of property and lordships in Derbyshire, and became the erector of that Gothic fortress which, hanging over the mouth of the Devil's Cavern, so well known to tourists, gives the name of Castleton to the adjoining village. From this feudal baron—who chose his nest upon the principle upon which an eagle selects her eyry, and built it in such a fashion as if he had intended it, as an Irishman said of the Martello towers, *for the sole purpose of puzzling posterity*—there was, or conceived themselves to be, descended an opulent family of knightly rank in the same county of Derby. The great fief of Castleton, with its adjacent wastes and forests, and all the wonders which they contain, had been forfeited in King John's stormy days, and had been granted anew to the Lord Ferrers of that day." There is a valuable article in the sixth volume of the *Archeologia* on this ruin, the writer contending for its Saxon foundation. Peverel had another residence near Castleton, at Brough, where some curious Saxon idols were exhumed in

1768. The castle on the Peak was ill adapted for the continual residence of a Norman of any distinction. Whilst the Peke (or Peak) fortress was in the possession of William, son of the first William Peverel, it became the scene of a tournament, which probably "came off," as the sporting phrase is, upon the plain near the castle: it lasted three or four days. "Pain Peverel, lord of Whittington in Shropshire, had two daughters, both (as usual) *very* beautiful, and *very* accomplished. The eldest, whose name was Mellet, inherited the martial spirit of her race, and though she was sought after by many of the young nobility of the land, she declared she would marry no one but a knight who had distinguished himself by his prowess in the field. Her father admiring her resolution, took the accustomed mode of procuring a husband, by proclaiming a tournament to be held at a certain time at "*Peverel's place in the Peke,*" and inviting all young men of noble birth to enter the lists and make trial of their skill and valour: he promised to the victor his daughter for a wife, with his Castle of Whittington as a dowry. Many were the knights that assembled, and severe and long-disputed were the contests; for the prize was a rich one, and the honour desirable. Among the competitors was a knight of Lorraine, with a maiden shield of silver, and a peacock for his crest. This unknown hero performed prodigies of valour, unhorsing and overcoming all who opposed him, and consequently gaining the favour of the fair Mellet: at length, as a last effort, having vanquished a knight of Burgundy, and a prince of Scotland, he was hailed victor, and received the glorious prize: thus carrying the Castle of Whittington (near Oswestry) to the family of Fitz-Warren." Castleton, or Peak Castle, is now the property of the Duke of Devonshire. This castle was used for keeping the records of the miners' courts, till they were removed to Tutbury Castle, in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

"The lead mines have been worked for many ages. The district was well known among the nations of antiquity for its lead mines; and it has been ascertained that they were worked by the Romans, and probably by the Britons. The miners have from time immemorial possessed regulations and laws of their own. By these laws or customs, any man, or set of men, might dig or search for veins of ore in the King's field, (comprising the greater part of the mountainous limestone district of Derbyshire, including all Wirksworth wapentake, and part of High Peak,) without the permission of, and without being accountable in any way to the owners or occupiers of the soil for the damage committed by them: orchards, gardens, and dwelling-houses, however, were excepted. The annual produce of lead from the mines was once estimated at between 5000 and 6000 tons; but the veins became poorer the

deeper they were excavated, and their present produce is of less value than the past. Other minerals are found in the mines: calamine, transparent fluor-spar, silver pyrites, crystals of calc, black jack, and the elastic bitumen or mineral pitch peculiar to this county, and of which there is an accumulated quantity open to the curious traveller in the 'Blue John Mine' at Castleton. The grand depository of the singular and rare species of galena which explodes, and rends the rocks with which it is mixed, was at one time Hay-cliff Mine, near Eyam."

Returning to our inn, we entered the Church, which is a fine specimen of early architecture. Here is nothing of much age in the date of the tombs, &c. The peculiar object of our visit was to see the painting of the *Holy Family in Bethlehem*, by one of the old masters, a cabinet picture of much excellence, enshrined at the east end in carved work, where it forms a singular altar-piece. The following morning ushered in a thoroughly wet day; only at the time we were at the entrance to the Peak Cavern was there any gleam of sunshine. We accompanied a guide to the *Blue John Mine*, so called from a crystalline structure discovered there, and almost only there, and valued at forty guineas a ton. The beauty consists in the colours of the spar running concentrically, whilst the open radiations of the crystal are from the centre to the circumference. This is one kind of the fluor-spar for which Castleton is so noted. It is found suspended round the walls and cupolas of the Water Hall excavations. This mine we explored to the depth of several hundred feet. *The Organ*, which is a beautiful pendant of stalactites, is low down in this mine, and when illuminated presents a fairy form to the visitor. A series of pure stems or shafts of stalactite hang from the roof of the cave, and are freakishly connected together, by bands of singular union. These are of a polished and waxen appearance, and reflect the light of torches held by the visitors. They have once been cemented, by the inferior portions or extremities, to a stratum of coarse material, which formerly was upraised, and formed part of the floor of the cavern: however, by the solution and disappearance of some underlying and less adhesive measure of earth, the columns of stalactite now suspend a free table of the same coarse material, giving a new semblance to the original structure. After wandering for awhile in the gloomy avenues of the nearer mine, it certainly affects one with a thrill of admiration (not at all unmixed with the chill of the apartment) to view this glittering handwork of hermit nature, hidden carefully, like a treasure laid deep in the bosom of the earth with a miser's jealous hand. Some of the unprincipled of the sight-seers have materially damaged this natural rarity.



The Organ.

Higher up in this wonderful mine, and at an abrupt angle from the usual track or descent, you are introduced into a hall or vestibule, which is like the interior of some necromancer's resplendent tower, being continued aloft farther than the eye can reach, even when aided by a blaze of artificial illumination. The guide here attaches to a cord a hoop circled with many lighted candles, and these are hoisted by a pulley &c. into the mid space of the amazing eupola. For ages streams of percolating water charged with calcareous material have trickled and sported down the sides of this cone, and the overcharge of lime having been deposited from the current, has enveloped the ruder crag with featherings, contortions, and interlaced mouldings of incomparable outline, surface, and undulation. For a surprise, a chorus or solemn chant is sung from the summit of the eupola, by choristers, who are remunerated for such pleasing service; and as the faint or swelling harmony reaches the attentive ear, with its peculiar wail and suppressed vibration, you feel like some sensitive victim entombed for a deadly sacrifice in a closed dungeon,

and listening to the dirge which is to consign you for ever to despair, annihilation, and utter oblivion. We commented for a while, at the entrance to the mine, upon the sombre grandeur of the hills and valleys around us: near to the left was *Mam Tor* (the shivering mountain), upon whose summit of yore the Roman drew his encampment, with traces which linger there at this remote period of time. It is called Mam, or the Mother-mountain, perhaps because, like an enduring and venerable mother, it stands unmoved by the weariness and ruin of circumstance and time. It rises one thousand three hundred feet above the vale of Castleton. It is well known also in books of natural wonders, as the "Shivering Mountain." "It is," says Rhodes, "an immense hill, composed of a very flaky substance (shale?); and sometimes in winter, during a severe frost, the decomposition is so rapid, that the Shivering Mountain, as it is called, keeps a continual discharge, accompanied with a gentle noise, resembling the sound of a river passing over its pebbly bed, as it comes upon the ear softened by distance. I once, during the stillness of a December night, heard the rush of the mountain very distinctly in my bedroom in Castleton; and I listened to the murmurs it made, but was utterly unable to discover the cause. The ruin from this eminence is not of a common description: the most striking features of the Peak of Derbyshire, its loftiest hills, and some of its loveliest dales, are included in the prospect. The valley below Mam Tor is overwhelmed with the fragments of shale to the extent of half a mile. The *Odin Mine*, upon the opposite side of the road, worked by the descendants of the Scandinavians, and retaining tokens of their ruder operations, is still one of the most productive in the country.

For a long time we stood in contemplation of the northern range of the country, with its shadowy front, severe outline, and rugged bosom, freckled with the snow-white habitations which here and there twinkle forth from shade in the bleak pasture land, and upon the edge of giddy boundaries. Soon they were for the most part obscured by the increasing rains; and in wretched plight we turned over the hill, and descended through the solemn ravine of the Wind Gates, with wet skirts, and feet bruised by the giant paving stones which strew the fearful causeway. Like all other "new people," we visited the "spar shops," especially the one at the mouth of the Peak Cavern, where the various products are worked by the lathe into articles of Etruscan imitation.

"Below the keep of the ruined fortress of Castleton" (we quote from a respectable authority) "rises a precipitous edge of limestone rock. At the height of 50 feet, in the face of this rock, is the entrance to the cavern of

the Peak, or, as it is vulgarly called, the "Devil's Cave," through a tolerably well-formed, though somewhat depressed, Gothic arch, 46 feet high, and 120 feet wide: within this arch the cavern recedes about 90 feet. Beyond the first recess the light of day does not penetrate: the remainder must be examined with torches. A low and narrow arch leads into a spacious opening called the "Bell House," whence a path leads to "First Water." This is a piece of water 42 feet in breadth, passing below a massive arch of rocks, which is in some places not more than 20 inches above the surface of the water. Laying himself along the bottom of a canoe, the visitor with his guide shoots through below the depending rocks into an opening 220 feet in breadth, and 121 feet in height. At the farther extremity of this excavation the stream, which flows along the bottom, forms what is called the "Second Water;" but this is generally passed on foot, and leads to "Roger Rain's"* house—a projecting pile of rocks, so called from the petrifying water which incessantly dribbles from the numerous crevices. Beyond this is an appalling hollow called the "Chancel," from which an opening leads into the "Devil's Cellar," and thence, by a rapid descent, to what is called the "Half-way House." From the Half-way House a passage leads into another immense concavity, which, from its being formed like a bell, is called the "Great Tom of Lincoln." This is perhaps the finest of the whole, and when brilliantly illuminated, has a sublime and pleasing effect. A little beyond this the opening becomes so narrow as to be barely sufficient to carry off the water. This astonishing excavation, wholly formed of limestone strata, abounding in marine exuviae, with an occasional intermixture of schist, extends, from the entrance to its farthest extremity, 2300 feet, and is supposed to be 645 feet in depth from the summit of the mountain."

We must not describe any thing to the reader about the wonders of the Peak. The fossils, the mines, the miners, the views, the gulfs, the mountains, the guides, and the victualling offices, are all to be found in a two-and-sixpenny hand-book, and may be perused; but they are best to be known by a willing pedestrian. We could not help grieving over a poor little dejected urchin, who seemed abandoned to hopelessness and disease, and who turned a rope-spinner's wheel at the entrance to the Peak Cavern. We learnt from a cottager hard by, that the little people employed here worked all hours of daylight in the summer-time, at low wages, and starved in the cold of winter. We have since, at our leisure, given our contemplation and feeling, as expressed to each other then (with the sketch before us), in another form than our wearying prose.

* Sir Walter has used the name of Roger Rain in his romance of the hero of the Peak.



The Child at the Wheel, in the Peak Cabern.

THE heart of nature beats! and with each gush
 Of the warm tide of love, divinest joys
 Pulse thro' creation. All the sounds which rush
 Thro' forests and thro' meadows, are the voice
 Of her maternal blessing. Warblers flush
 With woodland music. Groves, and urchin boys
 Laughing loud echoes in them. Winter's sighs,
 And summer's perfumed bees, have kindred harmonies.

From these, and of this store, whoso doth slake
 The world-enfevered lip, drinks life and truth:
 The venom'd luxuries of Mammon's lake
 All end in deathliness, and woes forsooth!
 This is the antidote which all must take
 In vulgar bondage, whilst the vampire tooth
 Of lone self-interest in the flesh doth lie;
 Without the good nurse, Nature, all must die.

The sun is bright, the heavens are blue,
 The warm light gushes thro' the trees,
 And verdant weeds of changeful hue
 Bend with the breeze.

The painted fly is round the stream,
 The dove coos from its maple bowers,
 The poor sick maiden in a dream,
 Seems lost in flowers.

All sorts of simple labouring men,
 With smiles and laughter move along ;
 The wrinkled woodman tries again
 His childhood's song.

The pillow'd grandame nods to hear
 Her old man's gay but feeble rhymes,
 " God sends " quo' she, " my children dear,
 " Such blissful times ! "

The white-hair'd little things come in,
 And circling round her — dull and blind —
 Forth from her kirtled lap begin
 Their flowers to bind.

Within the " Cavern of the Peak,"
 Behold a pale and wretched boy ;
 The rose-bud never knew his cheek,
 He hath no joy !

All day he turns that restless wheel,
 From sunrise until slumber shade,
 Seasons and change he scarce doth feel,
 In gloom array'd.

A cool, clear stream from hideous cells,
 Leaps by his feet with urgent wave,
 And tripping into light, it tells, —
 " I am *no* slave ! "

Upon *his* mind, from faëry lamp,
 No beams of youth's enchantment come,
 Bending, he hears — all cold and damp —
 A ceaseless hum !

Proud people pass him day by day,
 To gaze on wonders manifold :
 " Give me some mirth," his look doth say ;
 " I want no gold ! "

Offer him food, — he doth not crave ;
 Vesture, — the naked rocks would smile ;
 Talk to him of an early grave,
 Entomb'd the while.

A few bright hours of healthful day,
 Lent to that little helpless child —
 Bestowed upon the cast-away,
 Who never smiled —

Would save some greedy master shame,
 When childhood, in such lean array,
 Shall speed the curse of fire and flame,
 At one Great Day!

Oh! who that knew the lonesome boy
 Can look on God's own heaven, nor feel
 That he should hold a kindred joy,
 Loosed from his wheel.

By labour we *must* live, and wear
 The livery of Adam's kind;
 But do not banish nature's care,
 So far behind!

Give children the sweet-breathing fields,
 For one brief space of cheerful day,
 Before the injured blossom yields
 To slow decay!

A wretched coffin, in a roofless room,
 A poor, pale woman, prostrate, and in tears,
 (The only good thing left amidst the gloom
 Of dusty furnitures, the wrecks of years,)
 This is my noonday's vision — this the doom
 That curtain'd round with certainties appears.
 Nature! close up your bosom, warm and mild;
 No more sweet kisses! weep for this poor child!

We reminded ourselves of the words of a venerable antiquarian as we took our farewell of the scene, and returned to the town: — “The next castle which strikes us with high ideas of its great antiquity is Castleton, in Derbyshire, perched proudly like a falcon's nest on the summit of an almost inaccessible rock, over the mouth of one of the most horrid and august caverns that nature ever formed.”

Leaving our inn, as we trudged on towards Hope, frequently we turned to look at the dim, magnificent view behind us, until the rain-storm grew fast, and lashed us fiercely, and drove us bewildered into the dripping hedge-rows. We met a number of light carts, gigs, and all sorts of rustic vehicles, which jump on rusty springs to wake, or fair, or market-town; but alas! most of them contained melancholy, moist, well-dressed holiday people, with all the gloomy horror of Castleton reflected in their faces as they neared the promised scene of pleasure. The entrance to the village of Hope was

less discouraging: the merry wedding-bells tolled deliciously from the queer pointed steeple, and all the little boys who hallooed us into the place seemed to think we had sent our sweethearts forward, and were going to be married too. There are some details in the church chancel which would have been acceptable with more agreeable leisure: we contented ourselves with notice of the gurgoyles of the parapet, several of which have been destroyed lately by the orders of a holy person, who possessed the painful aptitude of receiving too readily *sins from senses*. God help his debility! There is a good brass, with an inscription under a quaint figure of one of the Balguys, by the side of the arch opposite to the pulpit,—

“A mundo ablactans oculos tamen ipse reflecto;
Sperno flens vitiis lene sopore cado:

Weaned from the world, upon it yet I peepe,
Disdaine it, weepe for sinne, and sweetly sleepe.”

The rest, being Englished, sheweth,—“Here lies Henry Balguy, who died on the 17th day of March, 1685, aged 77 years. Through Christ may his offences be forgiven him. Amen!” Near to this is some free carving, with the name “Ay. Reresby,” dated 1581.

In the year of our Lord 1584, and when her gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth (of most chaste remembrance) was distributing her mandates in rapid succession for the apprehension and chastisements of the “busy recusants,” one Oliver Atcherly, who practised as chirurgeon at Sheffield, was sent for by an especial messenger to visit a strange gentleman who had some-while been residing, with an only daughter and a slender establishment, at the Lodge or old Hunting Palace at Woodland Hope, which he had procured as a temporary residence from one of the Balguy family, who tenanted it upon privilege. No one knew from what part of the country the stranger had arrived, and few could guess how long he would be likely to remain with them. He concealed himself from vulgar speculation by modest and ordinary appearances, and seemed to have a strict rule over his solitary family. The chirurgeon counselled with the sick man, who seemed to him to be in sad extremity, and returned over the Hathersage Moors the same evening. The singularity of mind evinced by the patient, and his disbelief of impending dissolution, troubled the wise man exceedingly. Notwithstanding, from undeniable symptoms, Oliver had prognosticated speedy termination of existence, the patient as resolutely opposed the serious decision, and satisfied himself there would be considerable delay before any thing of the kind could possibly occur. The deep cogitations of the traveller were rudely disturbed

by the messenger of the earlier day—a clown of the district, who rode to the side of the doctor's high-trotting jade, and beckoned him immediately to return, at the express injunction of the lady of Woodland Hope. Once again within the seclusion of the sick man's chamber, and in the presence of the daughter, who exhorted her parent, with an eulogium of the stranger's wide and fair reputation, to make him acquainted with the cause of his renunciation of the doctor's ominous prediction, the important secret was unbound, and the mystery terminated. The tenant of the hunting-lodge was a Catholic of excellent family, who with a considerable sum of coin, which belonged to an ancient store, had resigned his mansion in the north of England to the mercy of the Commissioners of Sequestration, and had fled with his few faithful attendants into the security of a county less harried by the incessant foe. "I know, Master Oliver, that I have a mortal disease, and under other circumstances I should have inclined in Christian lowliness to your important decision," said the pale and struggling patient to the attentive surgeon; "but now that you are intrusted with my life, having the secret of my faith, believe me yet more:—For ten years, in which by statute and penalty I have been withheld from the sanctuary of my creed, I have prayed earnestly daily, with tears and fasting, that never might I leave this world until I have received the holy Eucharist as a viaticum from a priest of my own church, having first, in penitential spirit, made a good confession of all the sins of my life, by way of a becoming preparation for it; and recently I have had a notable sign that my prayer was heard, which was revealed in slumber to yonder fair girl, who is heiress to my slender store. Therefore, when you placed your hand to-day upon my heart, and felt the fluttering of the circulation at my arm, and noticed my frequent sighs and cold perspiration, and said that I must bid farewell to the world before two moons could rise again, I defied your prediction, and could not hold your science for a truth, having faith in heaven that my long petition should be received, and mercy given to me for my fond and pious anticipation."

A deep flush suffused the countenance of the master of healing; and he rose from his seat by the old man's pillow, and stretched forth his long hand until he grasped the shoulder of the maiden, who listened with fear and agitation to what she considered a fearful and momentous declaration; and thus spoke Master Oliver the surgeon, with a firm and a subdued intonation, to the dismay of the afflicted girl: "Turn your thoughts heavenward, children of expectation and suffering, for your petitions are remembered, and the hour of the old man's dissolution is nigh at hand. *I am a minister of the Catholic church!* Persecuted and hunted down, with a price upon my head,

I forsook the altar, and, with some disguise of beard and clothing, lived in the profession of a science (to which my mind was first directed in foreign schools), for my sustenance in part, and also that I might afford spiritual consolation, as oftentimes I have done, to the scattered sheep of the ancient fold. Your secret is not greater than mine own. Prepare you for the viaticum speedily !”

What more was in secrecy. The old gentleman bowed in wonder and solemn resignation to the will of Heaven, and soon afterwards peacefully expired. The household dispersed. The daughter, Catherine Percy, by the contrivance of the priest, found refuge with a family of her own persuasion, who were protected by less bigoted neighbours than were generally to be found at that precise period : and in a remote corner of the wild district of northern Lancashire, some months afterwards, she expired, in her gentle maidenhood, of a slow disease.

Noticing some heraldry daubed in dark paint upon the northern wall of the chancel, we were proudly informed by the aged clerk that we saw *his* family arms there blazoned,—“ The arms of the Woodruffes !” It was singular : he opened to us in the church bible a list of his predecessors in the clerk’s office of Hope : son after father—all *Woodruffes*—since the year 1628. To us the huge straw shoes, as large as ordinary cradles, used to keep the damp from his slender body, were trophies worth carrying from the Peak, but they were not to be won by flattery or gold. The stones at the entrance gates are peculiar, and admit one person only at a time into the churchyard path.

We cannot better describe the village of Hope than in the language of a celebrated tourist, whose works have been our chief edification in this part of the perambulation : “ The village of Hope consists of a group of picturesque and respectable dwellings, with the parish church, which stands on an insulated spot of ground by the road-side. It is nearly surrounded by a double row of lime-trees, and presents a very pleasing picture. Hope Dale, in the tourist’s eye, is adorned with a thousand beauties : it is indeed a lovely valley ; and though inferior in beauty to many parts of the same county, it yet contains some charming scenes, which, like light thrown into a picture by the hand of a master, have a magical effect. The traveller, whose chief object is to reach the end of his journey with expedition, beholds them with pleasure ; and the artist loiters among them with sensations of delight. A beautiful river winds gracefully through the dale, watering some excellent meadow land as it moves along. The cottages, with which the valley is studded, are of a sober grey tone of colouring, and pleasant to the eye. The

villages of Hope and Brough, half hidden amongst surrounding trees, and half revealed, increased the loveliness of the scene.

Near Malham Bridge, where the road to Castleton crosses the Derwent, some very beautiful views occur; and farther on the Dale, the near approach to Hope is exceedingly picturesque. The little river that passes by this village is overhung with ash and alder, which grow luxuriantly on its banks, amidst hazels, honeysuckles, and wild roses. Where the two rivulets, the Bradwell and the Noe, meet, a Roman town formerly stood: the site it occupied is a field now called the Halstead, near which a stone column, evidently Roman, a bust of Apollo, and the mutilated head of another divinity, both of rude workmanship, were found. Near this place bricks and urns impressed with Roman letters have occasionally been turned up with the plough and spade; and at Brough Mill, a gold coin of the Emperor Vespasian, in a good state of preservation, has been dug up.

As interesting to the reader, it may here be mentioned that the moors of Hope parish afford an extraordinary instance of the preservation of human bodies enclosed in them. In the year 1674 a grazier and his female servant, in crossing these moors on their way to Ireland, were lost in the snow, with which they were covered from January to May; when, on their being found, the bodies were so offensive that the coroner ordered them to be buried on the spot. After a lapse of twenty-nine years, on the ground being opened, they were in no ways changed, the colour of the skin being fair and natural, and the flesh as soft as that of persons newly dead. For twenty succeeding years they were occasionally exposed as a spectacle, but carefully covered after being viewed. They lay at the depth of about three feet, in a moist soil, or moss. The minister of Hope parish was present in 1716, forty-two years after the accident, at a partial inspection of these bodies. On the stockings being drawn off, the man's legs, which had not been uncovered before, were quite fair. The flesh, when pressed by the finger, pitted a little, and the joints played freely, without the least stiffness. Such parts of the clothing as the avidity of the country people to possess so great a curiosity had spared, were firm and good; and a piece of new serge worn by the woman did not appear to have undergone any remarkable change.

From Hope to Hathersage, a distance of four miles, we hurried onward, keeping to the banks of the river Noe, and so over Mytham Bridge, to our destination. This water adds gracefulness to many charming nooks of the country hereabouts, and is a desirable companion during a summer day. Arriving at Hathersage, we found there an intelligent clergyman, whom we had lost sight of for many years: he conducted us round the town, which is

of little importance, and we finished the perambulation by an inspection of the old church. The interior is in the most despicable order. The "Commandments" are broken — the pavement is damp and dislocated; the monuments are ill kept, and the very whitewash appears of the earliest "Gothic" application. The tombs of the Eyre family are worthy of notice; and at



the eastern end of the north aisle, which is devoted to the Shuttleworth family, are hung chaplets and coronets of artificial flowers, lilies and roses formed of white satin, to imitate natural garlands and floral devices. Certainly they are the more endurable tokens of affection, but not half so poetical; and these even were made in tears, or in sorrow; perhaps in chambers which could not yet deny the spiritual presence of the fair departed virgin, or in dwellings crowded with associations of her fading existence: who can tell but some of these ornaments were made with the fragments of bridal vesture,

the very skirts of which rendered themselves up for the pageantry of the mournful sepulchre. But dust and decay belong to all of us, as well as to flowers and white satin. We will kindly accept their funeral eloquence, saying to us, — “ The spirit is parted from its fellow spirit, and grieves; but the poor things of sense and form, which it offers as the tribute to its kindred soul, shall be the outward links to bind until the day of forms is over, and spirit amalgamates with its fond portion of the past, in the vortex of the disembodied and illuminated, who shall evolve round, and within, the ubiquitous centre of Divinity for ever and for ever.” In the belfry of this church are some quaint verses, upon the wall, containing rules for the bell-ringers, and the penalties upon amateur performers in the belfry, thus:—

“ You gentlemen that here do seek to ring,
See that these laws you keep in every thing;
Or else be sure you must, without delay,
The penalty thereof to th’ ringers pay.
If that you do intend here for to ring,
With hat or spurs on, do not touch a string,” &c. &c.

I do not think there is any superstition in this, but a warrantable injunction. A hat knocked off by an ascending rope would trip the other performers, and occasion accidents: the spurs, if caught by the “ foot loop,” would inevitably bring the head of the bungler to the floor, and disarrange the melodies.

The prevailing theme of the people of Hathersage is, that Robin Hood’s giant henchman, Little John (John Nailor), lies in their churchyard. I think they have cause to lay claim to the protection of his bones. The honour of Little John’s death and burial is contended for by rival nations. England has the first claim, for Hathersage. Then Hector Boetius claims him to be lying in the “ Murray Land ” o’ Scotland. Stanihurst, for Ireland, says: “ In Ostmantowne greene there standeth an hillock, named Little John’s Shot.” On a loose paper, in Mr. Ashmole’s handwriting, in the Oxford Museum, is the following:—“ The famous ‘ Little John ’ (Robin Hood’s companion) lyes buried in Fethersedge Churchyard, in the Peak of Derbyshire; one stone at his head, another at his feet, and part of his bow hangs up in the chancel; A. D. 1652.” We inspected the monstrous grave, and saw the stones, one of which has yet portions of the letters I. L. upon it. The tradition at Castleton is: “ A few years ago some curious person caused it to be opened, when there were found several bones of an uncommon size, which he preserved; but meeting afterwards with many unlucky accidents, he carefully replaced them; partly at the intercession of the sexton, who had

taken them up for him, and who had in like manner been visited with misfortunes. Upon restoring these bones all the trouble ceased."

We had scarcely left the south wicket of the cemetery than the Sheffield coach stopped at a tavern in the village, near to a common-looking brick edifice, upon the front of which was a title setting forth that this was—"The Parish Hearse House and Town Council Room." Of course there were two stories thus occupied. Near to this was a large residence occupied by an ex-member of the College of Surgeons, who had adopted the more profitable trade of manufacturing all sorts of "cutting instruments." We ascended the welcome vehicle, and were soon far over the moors.



CHAPTER XIV.

HARDWICKE HALL. — QUEEN MARY'S BED. — BESS OF HARDWICKE. — THOMAS HOBBS. — MANSFIELD. — SIR JOHN COCKLE THE MILLER — EXCAVATED HOUSES. — VILLAGE OF CLIPSTONE. — AN EVENING AT THE FOX AND DOGS. — KING JOHN'S PALACE. — THE GREAT LODGE. — SHERWOOD FOREST. — THE BERKLANDS. — THE SHAMBLE OAK. — WELBECK PARK. — THE GREENDALE OAK. — THE PARLIAMENT OAK. — ALLERTON. — RUFFORD PARK, AN ANCIENT SEAT OF THE LUMLEYS. — SOUTHWELL PALACE. — THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH. — INN AND CHAMBER WHERE CHARLES I. LODGED, AND LEGEND OF HIS RESIDENCE. — FOUR WELLS, THE RESORT OF PILGRIMS. — ROBIN HOOD. — MR. HINGHAM. — NOTTINGHAM. — REMAINS OF ANCIENT GATEWAY. — MORTIMER'S HOLE. — ANTIQUE BUILDINGS IN NOTTINGHAM. — THE CHURCH. — WILFORD. — CLIFTON CHURCH. — END OF THE WANDERINGS.



CHAPTER XIV.



HAT evening we rested in sable Sheffield; and before noon of the next day we alighted from the coach conveying us to Mansfield. The noble mansion of Hardwicke alluring us from our comfortable seat behind the coachman, to a few hours of healthy pedestrian exercise. Hardwicke Hall is about three miles from Pleasley, near to which we rested with our slender baggage.

The house is south of the road: to the north, over the heath, is seen the Castle of Bolsover, standing in majestic power upon the ridge of an undulating upland. On the site of the former castle, the ancient seat of the Peverils, and for which this place was formerly noted, Sir Charles Cavendish erected a fortress, in 1613, part of which is still habitable. In this mansion, in 1633, a magnificent entertainment was given by William, Duke of Newcastle, to Charles I. and his Queen. The decorations and devices were contrived by Ben Jonson; and the expenses amounted to nearly 1500*l*.

To speak sufficiently of Hardwicke, would be to say much that has been said of Chatsworth and fifty other noble edifices in England. The apartments are rich to excess with gorgeous tapestry, classical stuccoes, carved works, paintings, inlaid works, and gold and silver plate. One of the chambers is ornamentally lined with purest marble. The embroidered hangings of the chapel are exquisitely dear to the antiquarian eye. The great hall is a pure specimen of baronial magnificence, fresh from the usage of the sixteenth century.

“The taste of all these stately mansions,” says Lord Orford, “was that bastard style which intervened between Gothic and Grecian architecture; or which, perhaps, was the style that had been invented for the houses of the nobility, when they first ventured on the settlement of the kingdom after the termination of the quarrel between “the Roses,” to abandon their fortified dungeons, and consult ease and magnificence. What we call Gothic architecture was confined solely to religious buildings, and never entered into the decoration of private houses.” “Such a mansion,” says Edmund Aikin, in his remarks on *The Domestic Architecture of the Reign of Elizabeth*, “is described in the following lines of a contemporary poet:—

High lifted up were many lofty towers,
 And goodly galleries far overlaid,
 Full of fair windows and delightful bowers,
 And on the top a dial told the timely hours."

Faery Queen, Book I. Canto iv.

"The houses," he continues, "erected during the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries were frequently of magnificent dimensions; picturesque, from the varied lines and projections of the plan and elevation; and rich, by the multiplicity of parts; but they had lost all beauty of detail. The builders having abandoned the familiar and long-practised Gothic style, were now to serve their apprenticeship in Grecian architecture: 'stately Doricke and neat Ionicke worke' were introduced as fashionable novelties, employed first in the porches and frontispieces, and gradually extended over the whole fronts of buildings. Gothic architecture was doomed to fall. The first step towards its decline was, pursuing to excess the principle of simplification, and retrenching the most essential ornaments. The large windows of houses were divided by horizontal and upright bars, and, deprived of tracery and feathering, were as void of beauty in the details as in the general proportions. Buttresses and battlements were generally omitted. The roofs were faced with notched and carved gables, or screened by parapets of balusters or lattice-work, and decorated with obelisks or columnar chimney-shafts, while turrets and pavilions broke the line of elevation." *Ex uno omnes*. The exterior features of Hardwicke Hall are remarkably plain, the grand aim of the designer having been general loftiness, with windows as large as possible: the internal mansion has long been celebrated for its antique furniture and other decorations. The exterior ornaments of the building are confined in a parapet of open scroll-work, and the frequently repeated initials E. S., to commemorate the founder of the edifice, Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury.

The whole of the second floor at Hardwicke is said to have been used for the reception of Mary Queen of Scots, whilst she was in custody at Chatsworth, visiting occasionally in the companionship of her noble jailer. This can hardly be correct. Hardwicke Hall was unfinished at the time. Some say it was a chamber at old Hardwicke Hall (the ruin near to the present mansion); and tradition speaks of the apartment which she occupied. The ruins of the old hall, or Hunting Palace, are vast, though insecure and doomed to speedy destruction. The upper chambers of this desolate home command an extensive view of the southern boundaries. Certain however it is, that the bed shown as *Mary Queen of Scots' bed*, and the tapestry over the chamber door, were the work of her mournful leisure hours, and were probably procured from



Remains of Hardwicke Old Hall.

Chatsworth or Tutbury at an after period. It appears, from notes of history, that Queen Elizabeth was condescending enough to receive presents of tapestry and woven-work from the hands of her ill-fated prisoner. The inspection of these labours of the fair doomed queen bring melancholy thoughts, and we wish that monarchs had been more true, or that history had told more lies of them, to their greater Christian advantage; that is, if lies can deceive ages, and are not the shallow vices of the fleeting hour, as we sincerely believe them to be. The celebrated Countess of Shrewsbury*, “Bess of Hardwicke,” the notable

* Sir William Cavendish descended from an ancient family deriving name from Cavendish in Suffolk (their place and residence), settled in Derbyshire, in consequence of his marriage with the heiress of Hardwicke, about 1544. He was a most active agent in the Reformation. Henry VIII. made him a Privy Councillor and Treasurer of the Chambers. In the reign of Edward VI. he bought Chatsworth of the Agards. His widow, the Countess of Shrewsbury, furthered the building, afterwards tenanted by their eldest son, who was created

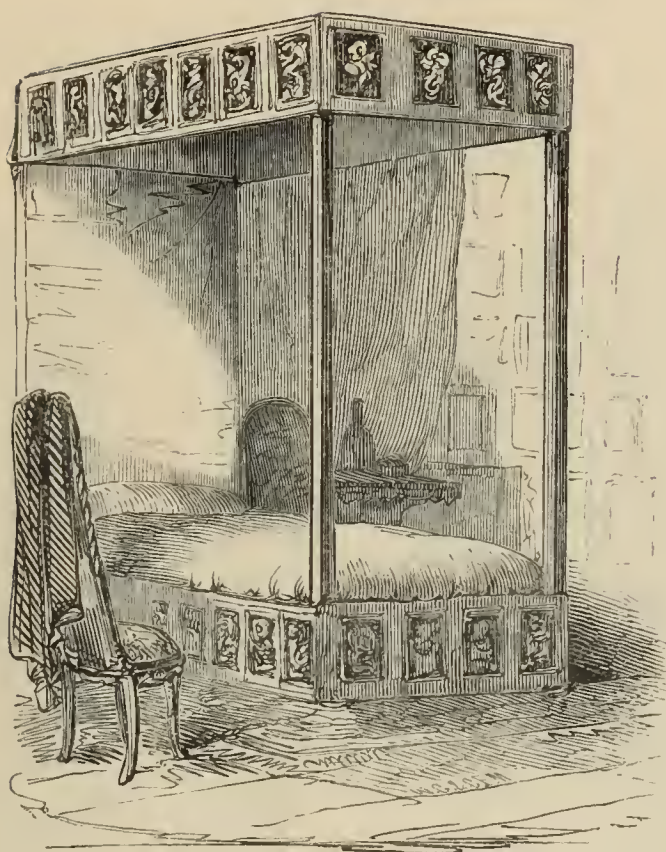


Queen Mary's Chamber.

dabbler in architecture, intrigue, and money-craft, built the new mansion about the end of the sixteenth century. "She died," says an author, "because a great frost happened one year, so that she was sorely restricted in her schemes of building up new houses; and the frost continuing, contrary to her inclinations, she took it to heart grievously, and died away speedily. Truth was, *she could not live without building!*" There is a passage in a letter of hers to her husband (of whom she was extremely jealous for his control over the lovely Queen Mary), which seems to acknowledge that the Queen of Scots did really visit Hardwicke from Chatsworth House. It is in the postscript: —

"Lette me here how you, youre charge, and love dothe, and commend me I pray you. It were welle you cente fore or fyve peces of the great

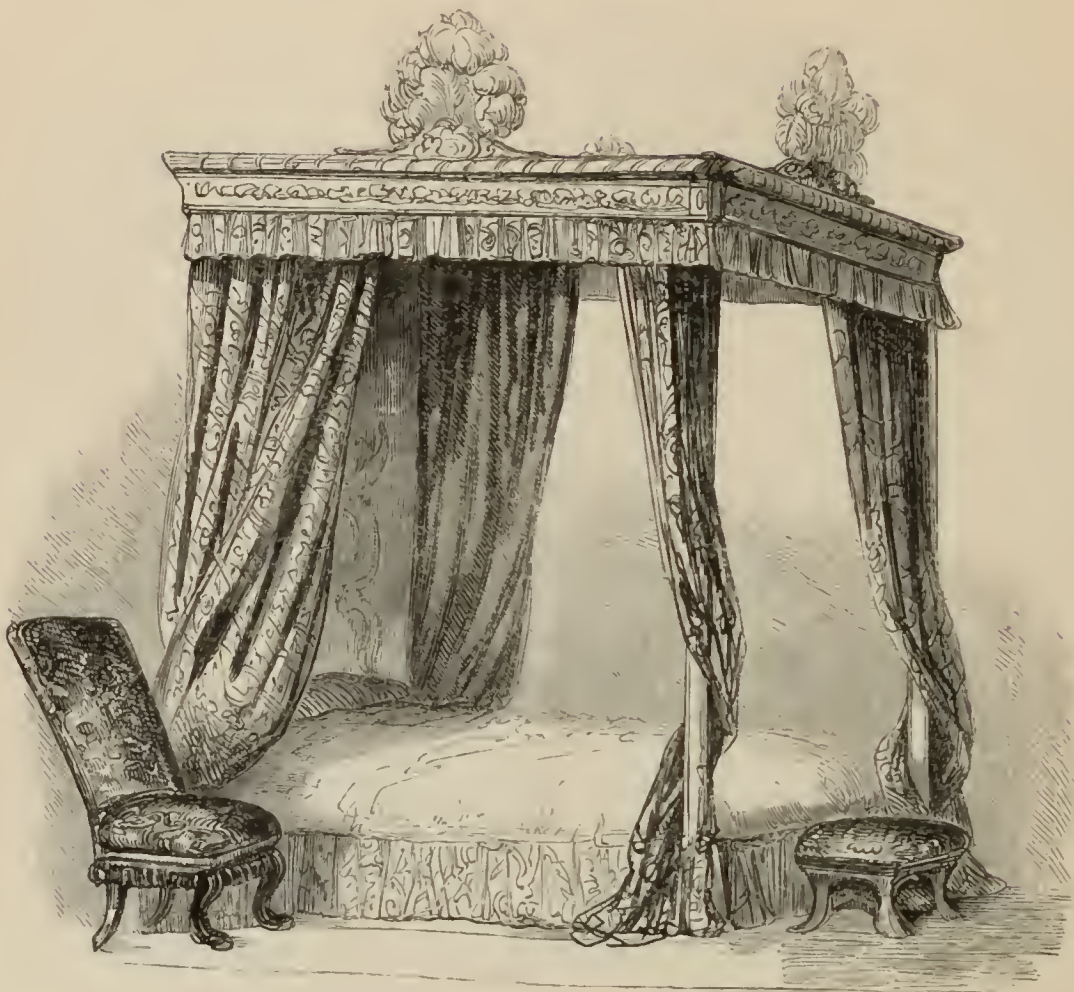
Baron Cavendish and Hardwicke, 1605, and Earl of Devonshire, 1618. His great grandson, the fourth earl, was a zealous promoter of the Revolution, and was, in 1694, created Marquis of Harrington, and Duke of Devonshire. The title remains in the family.



Queen Mary's Bed.

hangings, that they might be put oup and some carpetes; I wyshe you wolde have thynges yn that redynes, that you myht come w'in 3 or foure dayes after you here from courte." This letter was written in 1577, several years before the new house was erected.

In Grainger's "Biographical History of England" we read the following:— "Elizabeth Lady Cavendish, widow of Sir William Cavendish, and Countess of Shrewsbury. Her portrait is at Welbeck. This lady, who was much celebrated for her beauty and accomplishments, and still more for her extraordinary fortune in the world, was daughter of John Hardwicke, Esq., of the county of Derby. At the age of fourteen she was married to Robert Barley, Esq., who in about two years left her a very rich widow. The next husband was Sir William Cavendish, ancestor of the Dukes of Devonshire and Newcastle. The third was Sir William St. Lowe, captain of the guard to Queen Elizabeth; and her fourth, George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. She built Chatsworth, Hardwicke, and Oldcotes, three magnificent seats in Derbyshire. Mary, Queen of Scots, was long under her care at Chatsworth. She took it into her head to be jealous of the unfortunate princess, an unlucky circumstance for the royal captive. She died Feb. 13, 1607. She was commonly called by the name, Bess of Hardwicke."



The State Bed at Hardwicke.

The *state beds* of this mansion are fine remembrances of an earlier period. There are admirable portraits, in the gallery, of Queen Elizabeth, Lady Jane Grey, Sir Thomas More, Cardinal Pole, Bishop Gardiner, Countess of Shrewsbury, Sir William Cavendish, first Earl of Devonshire, Colonel Charles Cavendish, and the renowned Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, author of the "Leviathan," and the friend of Descartes, Galileo, Gassendi, and other learned men upon the Continent. He was formerly tutor in this family; and being removed here from Chatsworth at the advanced age of 92, he soon expired. He died 1697.

Thomas Hobbes was born at Shrewsbury in 1588. His birth was premature, owing, as tradition relates, to the fear which his mother experienced, upon the news being circulated that the Spanish Armada was upon the English seas. He was through life remarkable for a constitutional timidity, attributed to the foregoing derangement. In his youth he studied at Oxford, and afterwards made a tour through France, Italy, and Germany, as tutor to



Lord Cavendish, afterwards Earl of Devonshire; and upon the return of this nobleman to England, he resided with him in the capacity of private secretary. Lord Bacon, Ben Jonson, and Herbert of Cherbury were his friends and associates. Upon the death of his pupil, Hobbes resorted to Paris, and undertook the education of the young Earl of Devonshire, with whom he also made a Continental tour. At Pisa he was introduced to the celebrated Galileo the astronomer. After his return to England, in 1637, he resided with the Earl's family at Chatsworth in Derbyshire. His metaphysical studies, however, owing to the troubled state of the times, were blended with ruder politics; and being of the Cavalier party, he found it suitable for his peace of mind to make a second retirement to Paris, where he associated with the philosopher Descartes, and the learned men who pursued their studies under the protection of Cardinal de Richelieu. He became mathematical instructor to Charles, Prince of Wales, who resided in the French capital, having there commenced the publication of those works which afterwards declared him to be the stubborn advocate of absolute monarchy. His principles are best developed in the book most connected with his biography, and entitled "The Leviathan; or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil." He is the genius of the *selfish system* of moral philosophy; according to his view, all notions of right and wrong depending upon motives of self-interest alone. His other works are numerous, and are to be found mentioned critically in various popular treatises upon the several systems of philosophers. Charles the Second appears to have amused himself with the quarrels between this dogmatical author and his orthodox clergy, who were continually in warfare with the stubborn metaphysician; and the King is reported to have said, that "Hobbes was a

bear, against whom the Church played its young dogs, in order to exercise them." When Charles recovered the throne of England, he conferred an annual pension of 100*l.* upon the author of the "Leviathan." "The Behemoth, or a History of the Civil Wars from 1640 to 1660," was published in his retirement at Chatsworth, in 1674. He died in 1679, at the advanced age of ninety-two. There is a tradition extant, that he was borne in a litter from Chatsworth to Hardwicke, and that he died immediately upon his arrival at the latter residence; but there is nothing relating to this in the more creditable compilations respecting him. The portrait in the Hardwicke Gallery bespeaks a man of gloom and irritability, of remarkable self-possession and wariness, and of acute perception and mental activity. There is much that is pedantic in his style. His positions are minute and replicated, and there is abundance of that hasty satirical conclusion at a fault, which is characteristic of the writers of the free-thinking order. Sir James Mackintosh considers the style of Hobbes to be *the very perfection of didactic language*. Our own opinion, perhaps, leans to error, being made in want of sympathy with the individual and his peculiar doctrine.

Crossing the park at the rear of the Hall, and striking into the narrow country roads, which are rather perplexing in this vicinity, by slow paces we arrived at Mansfield, upon the market-day, when the streets were filled with fruit, cattle, empty carts, and the usual lingering crowd of rustic people. We tarried here only to take our refreshment at the Hotel; but we were not unmindful of the droll ancient ballad appertaining to a Sir John Cockle, once miller of Mansfield, who resided on the skirts of the town, and gave refreshment to King Henry II. when he had lost himself returning from Sherwood Chase. There is a prettier chime in this ballad than in many we are accustomed to read; and the graphic recital of the presentation of Sir John at court, with his "mincing old Trot" of a wife, and Richard his son, and the red-haired sweetheart Jugg Grumball, is unrivalled:—

" Thus in great merriment — was the time wholly spent,
 And then the ladies prepared to dance :
 Old Sir John Cockle and Richard, incontinent,
 Unto their places the King did advance,
 Here with the ladies, and sport they did make ;
 The nobles with laughing did make their sides ache."

Give us o' winter-time the alcove of a manorial kitchen, and warm us a spiced cup of perry on the red hearth, and lend us a well-thumbed " Garland of Old Ballads," with the corners turned down like the lappets of the scullery-maids' head-gear, and I warrant you we will not sigh for the bustle

of towns, but rest as quietly in our nook as the most grimly of cruel aunts could desire us to be. Mansfield is still the Miller's Town: there is an array of windmills upon the verge of the "Chase," enough to inspire the remembrance of Don Quixote to a mere school-child in romance.

At the edge of the town, leaving for Clipstone, are some strange houses by



the wayside, excavated in the sandstone. Alas for the forest of old! it is nearly all gone, branch and stem: between Mansfield and Clipstone nothing remains but a wide heath densely covered with gigantic gorse, and traversed by roads of the wildest description. Far and wide is the brown extent of barrenness: perchance a hollow fragment of the forest lord is left within the soil; but such traces are rare, and are not likely to be found so soon in the cincture of the weeds and the thorns, which hold triumph, like slaves who glory in the ruin of their dejective ruler. As we neared the village, we were amazed to see the procession of light carts (nineteen or twenty) rapidly conveying the oats from the stubble-field. Soon, however, we perceived there was reason for the abundance of farming gear, and for the plenty of auxiliaries. The Duke of

Portland, one of the most judicious farmers in the kingdom, has a pet farm in the skirts of the small woodland called Clipstone Forest, and the arrangements there, upon the model system, are sufficient to make a little rack-rented, Midland farmer nibble his finger-ends away for sheer vexation.

The village is delightful. The scenery around is the pure English; and every thing, in every place of the ducal domain, shows how much the symmetrical apportioning and ordering of farming lands and conveniences tends to heighten the natural beauties of the surrounding country. Sorely were we afraid we should not find a home for wearied limbs in the slender place we had confided in for a night's lodging. Praise the chance! Cornelius Amos, of the "Fox and Dogs," with many apologies offered us his small neat chamber as a refuge for the night; and gratefully we accepted the favour. One difficulty he stated, — there was but *one* room for company down stairs, the contracted kitchen, devoted to evening visitors. Very soon, before we had quenched our thirst, — scarcely before we had taken our places, — in came the labouring men to their pipes and ale. At first we discomfited them; but we gave them the run of our hearts, and chatted homely things to them, and sang them worlds of song, and perpetrated certain curious amusements for their gratification, which will long be remembered in that simple dwelling. The landlord's son-in-law had a glorious voice, and, in modulated tenor, he delighted us in turn with store ditties — "Nothing to do," "The Bonny Bunch of Roses," and "The Painful Plough." Our laughter and our ready purse made them "as happy as young cuckoos, with open mouths, and plenty to put in them," as one said to us. When we gave them, as the finale, "Mrs Hemans' Evening Hymn," with voices in unison, "Old John the labourer" crushed his deformed hat upon his grey head in a paroxysm of sentiment, and rushed home to his family, exclaiming as he stumbled over the threshold — "Well, well! ee' never heard the like on it — but that's grand!"

In the morning, after disposing of some bacon and eggs fried in the dripping-tin, we visited "King John's Palace," as it is termed, — a mere shell of ruin, at the rear of Mr. Amos's garden, in a wide meadow; the traces of defence are to be followed as far as the edge of the moat pool to the south. Before the Norman Conquest, Osberne and Ulsi had two manors in Clipstone (*King's Clipstone*, since designated). These paid gold for one carucate. The land was two carucates. Roger de Busli had in demesne there afterwards one carucate and a half, with twelve villains (small farmers) and three cottagers (called *Borders*), having three carucates and a half, and a mill of 3s. There was a wood, by places pasturable, a mile either way. In Edward the Confessor's time it was valued 60s.; in the Conqueror's day, 40s.



King John's Palace.

John, King of England, whilst Duke of Mortaigne, buried his treasons and dissatisfactions in this Palace of Clipstone, and in the hunting-grounds of the vicinity. Edward I. resided here. Mansfield also was a court residence. King John's mark is proved to have existed upon a tree, cut down an inconsiderable time since; it was eighteen inches within the tree, and a foot from the centre: the tree was calculated to have been planted in 1087.

Pursuing our morning path to the Berklands, we stayed to admire the *Great Lodge* beyond the river Maun, which is of Gothic architecture, enriched with excellent statues, in niches aloft, representing Robin Hood, Little John, King Richard Cœur de Lion, Friar Tuck, Maid Marian, and the Minstrel: the whole has an imposing effect from the pathway leading to it, and the edifice commands a survey for miles around. The few tried and valiant associates of Robin Hood are stated, by the believers in ballad history, to have been the following:—John Naylor, or *The Naylor*, called Little John, who stood six feet ten inches high, and was famous both for wit and bravery. *Much*, the miller's son, who was dwarfish of stature: he was a miller's son, and, having joined the outlaw's society, was called *Much* because of his diminutive bodily proportions. Scathelock, the third, was so called

from his skill in cracking the crowns of his opponents at quarte-staff. Will Stutely, or Stoutly, was the fourth, also named from his daring and hardihood. Fifth was the chaplain Friar Tuck, who took his name from one of the creatures of ancient superstition, a hunter in bogs and mire. Then there were Allen o' Dale, a gentle minstrel, crossed in love; and the Maid Marian, who was the only true love of the woodland chief.

Sherwood Forest, so called (for but a small portion bears forest growth), is twenty-five miles long, and from seven to nine miles broad, as established by the perambulation of the 16 Henry III. The Peverils had the command and the profits of this forest in their ascendancy. In the Forest books is a record—a copy of a charter: King John granting to Matilda de Caux (Cawse) and Ralph Fitzstephen, her husband, and heirs, all liberties and free customs, which any of the ancestors of the said Matilda, lords of Laxton, had held in Nottinghamshire, including Sherwood Forest. The same afterwards fell to the Birkings, heirs general to Matilda. In 1226 the Forest was in possession of this son of John Birking. This line failing, it went to the Everinghams, who lost it by forfeiture, temp. Ed. I., when it reverted to the crown. Since then its civil jurisdiction has been vested in the sheriff of the county, and its forest jurisdictions granted as marks of royal favour among the nobility and gentry. It was thus divided into “keepings:”—1. Between the rivers Lene and Doverbeck, to which were one forester riding with his page, two foresters on foot, two verderers, two agistors (those who take cattle to the forest). This contained the Hays of Baskwood, Lindeby, and Willah. 2. Was the High Forest, including the Hays of Berkland and Bilhagh, and Clipstone Park; to this were two foresters riding, two pages, two agistors. 3. Was Rumwode, having one forester on foot, and two wood-wards, and so on, for the limitation of boundaries and the preservation of law. The chief keeper was bound to have a page bearing his bow, whose duty it was to collect *chiminage* (or the tolls). Little remains of these keepings but Berkland and Bilhagh. We passed through the Berkland. It is a noble relict of the old forest. The new generation of trees stand fairly in due order to the sight; but like neglected parents, the struggling old oaks assert their venerable claims, and in romantic grouping attract the best remembrances and feelings of the summer wanderer. “Here,” says a pleasant author, who is a forester of Sherwood, “he who loves the awful, as well as the beautiful, may gratify his feelings in every gradation from one to the other, or even in the blending of both at once. Ferns in endless profusion form a ground-work, as far as the eye can pierce through the light openings, where young birches shake their sunlit locks, as in a wild and happy dance,



The Berklands.

around which, in natural yet almost regular circles, other birches, of matronly grace and growth, bend their silvery forms, and pensively smile, in remembrance of their own bright days of youthful frolic, here revived before them; while huge *conservative* oaks, of different ages, and in all attitudes, from the wildly fantastic to the majestic and terrible, contemplate the orgie from various distances, as though it were a contemptible intrusion upon their own ancient prerogative of awful tranquillity." And who can forget, who admires the sterling description of William Howitt, those words of his which portray the Bilhagh of Old Sherwood Forest? "A thousand years, ten thousand tempests, lightnings, winds, and wintry violence have all flung their utmost force on these trees; and there they stand, trunk after trunk, seathed, hollow, grey, gnarled, stretching out their bare sturdy arms, or their mingled foliage, and ruin—a life in death. All is grey and old. The ground beneath is grey, the trees are grey with clinging lichens; the very heather and fern that spring beneath them have a character of the past. If you turn aside and

step amongst them, your feet sink in a depth of dry moss and vegetation that is the growth of ages; or, rather, that ages have not been able to destroy. You stand and look around, and, in the height of summer, all is silent: it is like the fragment of a forsaken world. To the contemplative mind they are inscribed all over with characters of a strange power. They show us at a glance, and with a palpableness which few things beside possess, how far the day of their first growth is past by, how far the ages of feudalism and civilisation lie asunder." The trees which are in the thick wood to the right, as you enter the Forest ground from Clipstone Lodge, are very patriarchs of their kind, and have listened to the tales of the winter's wind for centuries. We present them as an illustration,—

" A giant race, and undegenerate still."

The Duke of Portland cherishes these victims of time, but diligently does he proceed to work to supply their place by millions of healthy saplings. The Berkland is a model of an oak nursery. Every thing is as systematic — circumvallation, rank, labellings of birth, protections, and positions—in this, as in the fantastic white-papered parterres of a cockney garden in the spring time.

It is an encouragement that the oak has few diseases: it bears its character with it from remote antiquity. The Celts worshipped Teut, under the form of this tree. The Britons regarded it as a symbol of Tamana, God of Thunder. The Yule log, the substitute for the perpetual Baal fire, was always sundered from it. The Druids planted their apple trees near to it, for good increase of their produce. Hear what Professor Burnett says of the chorus lately so popular, and everlasting as the half gay, half melancholy burden of the earlier ballads. "Hey Derry Down" was the religious chorus signifying, "In a circle the Oaks move around!" Criminals were tried and condemned under oaks, the culprit standing in a circle made by the chief Druid's wand. Britain formerly, and in aboriginal date, was plumed from shore to shore with such verdure: hence it was called *Clas Merddin*, the Sea-defended-green-spot. The Veneti, aided by the Cymry, fought the Romans; and truly this leads to a remark, that in very early times we had the instinct for naval architecture. The vessels were made of oak, impenetrable to the rostra of the enemy, and were trimmed for action with hide sails, and chains, and cables. How much oak is there not in our olden buildings? Arthur's Round Table was made of that material. There are chairs of the same in Westminster Abbey 540 years old. An Oxford prize poem, of great poetical merit, written by G. Richards, Oriel, has these lines:—

“Up the light Briton sprung—to chase the deer
 Through Humber’s vales, or heathy Cheviot drear.
 Languid at noon, his fainting limbs he cast
 On the warm bank, and sought his coarse repast ;
 With acorns shaken from the neighb’ring oak,
 Or sapless bark that from the trunk he broke,
 His meal he made.”

In the note to this, Dio Nicæus is made to say that the Britons in the woods would live upon the woods or bark of trees. Of what value the mast or acorn food was in subsequent times we well know. At the end of the seventh century King Ina legislated thereupon. He who felled a tree under which thirty hogs could stand was mulcted sixty *shillings*. The sound of an axe was sufficient for a conviction. A. D. 1116 was named “a heavy-timed, vexatious, and destructive year,”—such a famine prevailed from the failure of “mast.” King John, in his charter for forest liberties, was obliged to redress the encroachments upon “pannage.” Rufus was the first of the Norman family who planted oak. In Henry II.’s time, England was nearly covered with oak forests. Fitz-stephen says, “a large forest lay round London, in the coverts whereof lurked bucks and does, wild boars, and bulls.” The Royal Forests were those left after the general clearing. In the time of Henry II. an inquisition was taken respecting the Sherwood Forest, by which it appears the right of hunting in it was considered of great importance, and an act was passed in the time of Henry III. to define its boundaries. Even in the reign of Henry VII. the forests (according to Polydore Virgil) occupied one third of England. Evelyn, the author of the celebrated work “On Forest Trees,” had great reverence and sympathy for oak trees. “Of two men,” says he, “who cut down the ‘Vicar’s Oak,’ in Surrey, one lost an eye, and the other broke his leg.” How many accidents must have befallen the devastators of the Berklands? There are trees found here which still bear the regal initials of early kings.

On the left-hand side of the path (within the railing), just after you pass the broader traverse-way, is an immense oak tree, hollowed amazingly on the side distant from the fence. In main circuit it is 34 feet; at 6 feet from the ground it measures 31 feet 9 inches. We heard a rude voice near, attempting a chorus of the preceding night: we recognised a friend in the sultry woodman. This he told us was called the “*Shamble Oak*.” Once there was a butcher in Clipstone, who made his money without any notable sale of meat. At last he was seen to dispose of mutton at a distance from home. Suspicion was excited: a watch was appointed over him. At midnight he lurked around the Berklands, and was noticed

to struggle upon the ground with a sheep belonging to another dealer. He cut its throat, and cautiously dragged it through the trees to the hollowed trunk, which remains to signalise his fatal end. Enough for the midnight.



The Shamble Oak.

The next morning the sheep was found dressed high up in the trunk of the "Shamble Oak." The hollow space below concealed the blood and waste. The butcher was confronted with his prize in the wood, and, soon after, imitated the stolen mutton by dangling from an oaken tree.

This day the sun had great power, and we were loth to leave the shade, where we lingered, singing snatches of "Robin Hood," and renewing that darling theme of boyhood:—

"In this our spacious isle I think there is not one
But he hath heard *some* talk—of him and Little John;
And, to the end of time, the tales shall ne'er be done
Of Scarlock, George-a'-Green, and Much, the miller's son,
Of Tuck the merry friar, which many a sermon made
In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws, and their trade."

Drayton.

We had an inclination to see Welbeck Park, and to ascertain the present situation of the wonderful "Greendale Oak."* We sauntered, therefore, forward in cheerful conversation, and some three or four miles onward entered



The Greendale Oak in Welbeck Park.

the gate from the village of Norton. The park scenery at Welbeck is a commendable rival to the grandeur of the Berkland. It is the *beau-ideal* of park scenery. We loitered in happiness through the afternoon; and, finding nothing of interest at the abbey — nothing astir save a few snarling, half-asleep groom cubs — we sketched the tree, and sheltered in its lengthening shade. Poor old thing! with all the props and stays round it, it looks like a

* Gilpin says, "The Greendale Oak is supposed to be 700 years old."

superannuated crippled man, who has tired the world out with his infirmities, leaning for help upon the shoulders of his "hard-hearted" grand children. Still the hope of another summer or two, which is in the old boy, furnishes a few numerable leaves for his plume of pride,—the only spare remains of former panoply,—and you expect to hear him laugh out, spasmodically and gruffly, when you shake your head, and say, "It will soon be all over with him!" he is so very proud in his age and poverty. In 1724 an arch was cut through this tree by the head gardener, out of compliment to the lord, who, upon his marriage, drove his carriage through the opening upon his return with the bride from the church. The carriage, which was drawn by four horses, was one of the narrow trailing vehicles pictured in old coloured prints of that era. The circumference of the stem above the arch is 35 feet 3 inches. The arch is ten feet high, and something more; the width of the same, 6 feet 3 inches; height to the top of the live stump and branch, 54 feet.

We were fatigued when we had lunched at the sign of "The Tiresias" (race-horse) in the village. The landlady favoured us with her private vehicle and pet pony to our inn in Clipstone, refusing to receive aught but our thanks for the accommodation. Her nephew drove us at a dashing rate through Cuckney, Church Worksop, and Market Worksop, to the "*Parliament Oak*," at the verge of Old Clipstone Park. This is the oldest park in England, having been enclosed before the Conquest. There was a parliament held in Clipstone Park, temp. Ed. I. 1290. Tradition says it was held under the oak represented by our illustration. I think it was in the palace. A parliament may have been held in the former rustic place; but all debates on business of state were called parliaments, and it is well known that courts for forest causes were sometimes held in the open air. Nothing strange in this! witness the custom observed by the Saxon kings, of holding court in the south porch of the church of the parish. "Edward the First," says a local historian of recent date, "held a great council under the shade of an immense oak, the well-guarded trunk of which is still standing, at the corner of Clipstone Park, on the side of the road between Mansfield and Edwinstowe, and is famous through all the country as the *Parliament Oak*. The event is dated by historians 1290, as consequent on some information the king received while hunting in the forest, of a revolt of the newly-conquered Welsh, against whom he immediately took proceedings." The splendid ruin here sketched has some portions of sound timber. The sapless flakes from the interior are durable. It furnishes green boughs. Its girth is 28 feet 6 inches.

"Thou wert a bauble once—a cup and ball
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,



Parliament Oak.

Seeking her food, with ease might have purloined
 The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
 Thy yet close-folded latitude of boughs,
 And all thy embryo vastness, at a gulp.
 Time made thee what thou wert — King of the Woods !
 And Time hath made thee what thou *art* — a cave
 For owls to roost in."

Farewell to the oaks of Sherwood, time-honoured and romantic ! Roger de Hovedon, speaking of Richard I., says : " He set out to see the Sherwood forests, which he had never seen, and they charmed him exceedingly." Oh thou man of brawn and thongy sinews, better perhaps had it been for thee to cleave the wild tree with the peaceful axe, than to revel in blood, and hew down paynims in the Syrian field ! When we paid our bill to Amos at Clipstone, there was a look of woful disappointment. Visitors had been summoned to meet our merry faces at the Hare and Hounds. Fate bade us

proceed and leave them in the clouds of sorrow. We took affectionate farewell of the party. Good bye, Cornelius Amos. Good bye, dames and maids of Edwinstowe. Home is in the view — wives, darlings, and ingle-nooks. Crossing the fields, north-eastward to Edwinstowe, we encountered our guests of the last evening, who could not believe we were departing. “Aye, lads,” said Old John, “well, well, to be sure! Here I have brought over such a lot on ’em down to see you. I told ’em what chaps you were: we thought o’ just having a jolly turn of it.” This information hastened our speed, but they waved their caps and hats from the distance, and bawled a hoarse “farewell!” Our memory is fragrantly embalmed in Sherwood, and the pen-and-ink sketch of the *Old Palace* is reverently exhibited. We have no pretended intimacies there with Scarlock, or Much the miller’s son. Little John is a person we should have “cut,” even upon the greensward of the Berklands; but we know some far honester people thereabouts, with whom we had sooner eat beans and bacon, than dine with an alderman at six o’clock upon a Sunday afternoon.

Away we trudged, through Edwinstowe, to Ollerton. The church at the former place (porch and boundary) was well secured. “Six days shalt thou serve the world,” they say; “and on the seventh the Church of God shall be opened, and there will be a collection at the door for the washing of surplices.” Poor religion! how art thou tarred and feathered by those who profess to love thee most. At Ollerton, in the hop district, we met with superior accommodations at an inn bearing sign “The Hop-Pole.” Thoroton, the antiquary, had spoken well of this resting-place long before we were born. It maintains the good character. We dined, entered notes, carolled our old ditties, and slept. At half-past five of the next morning we were riding through Rufford Park, where is an ancient seat of the Earls of Scarborough, upon the site of a monastic foundation, mentioned by Thoroton. Our conductor, who drove a spring-cart, was at our service for the next twelve miles, in accordance with a secret bargain, agitated the preceding evening. We found him a shrewd fellow, full of wit and information, and an excellent guide through the country. By Bilsthorpe and Kirklington, and Normanton, he knew every one’s mill, and farm, and sheep, and could any where nod over a couple of acres of turnips, to an intimate acquaintance in the coppice or the fold-yard of the distance. He was passionately fond of society, and looked into every larger bush or barn for some one to say “Good morning” to. We breakfasted him to the extent of his appetite in Southwell, giving many thanks for his early conveyance.

We took four sketches in this venerable ecclesiastical town. One of the



Southwell Gate.

Palace, beautified formerly by Cardinal Wolsey for his own residence. This is in ruin, having been woefully dealt with in the troubles preceding the Commonwealth. It adjoins the collegiate church, which is in itself a venerable pile, and, with the exception of St. Augustine's at Canterbury, the most ancient in England, offering a supreme object for antiquarian observation. The church or minster has undergone many changes: it has repeatedly been restored in various portions, and has suffered dreadfully from military violence. One of the ancient gateways is represented in the illustration. The church is said, by Sir Edward Coke, to have been founded, or erected, by Paulinus, first archbishop of York, who baptized King Edward and his followers in the adjoining stream, on Easter Day, 627 A. D. Many liberties in Sherwood were granted to it by early Norman kings. It is supposed to have been the Roman station "Ad Pontem." A considerable family, named "Southwell," resided here in the reign of Henry VI.: one, an ecclesiastic, was buried in Lincoln Cathedral. Some say the palace on the south side of the minster was erected by Wolsey; some say it was constructed by the Archbishop Booth. It formerly stood within a

beautified park of ground, but this was devastated by the Puritanical party during the wars. After the dissolution the collegiate church was repudiated, and taken for the mother church of the town and county of Nottingham. King Edward VI. granted John, Earl of Warwick, the manor and hereditaments. During his reverses, Charles I. was often at

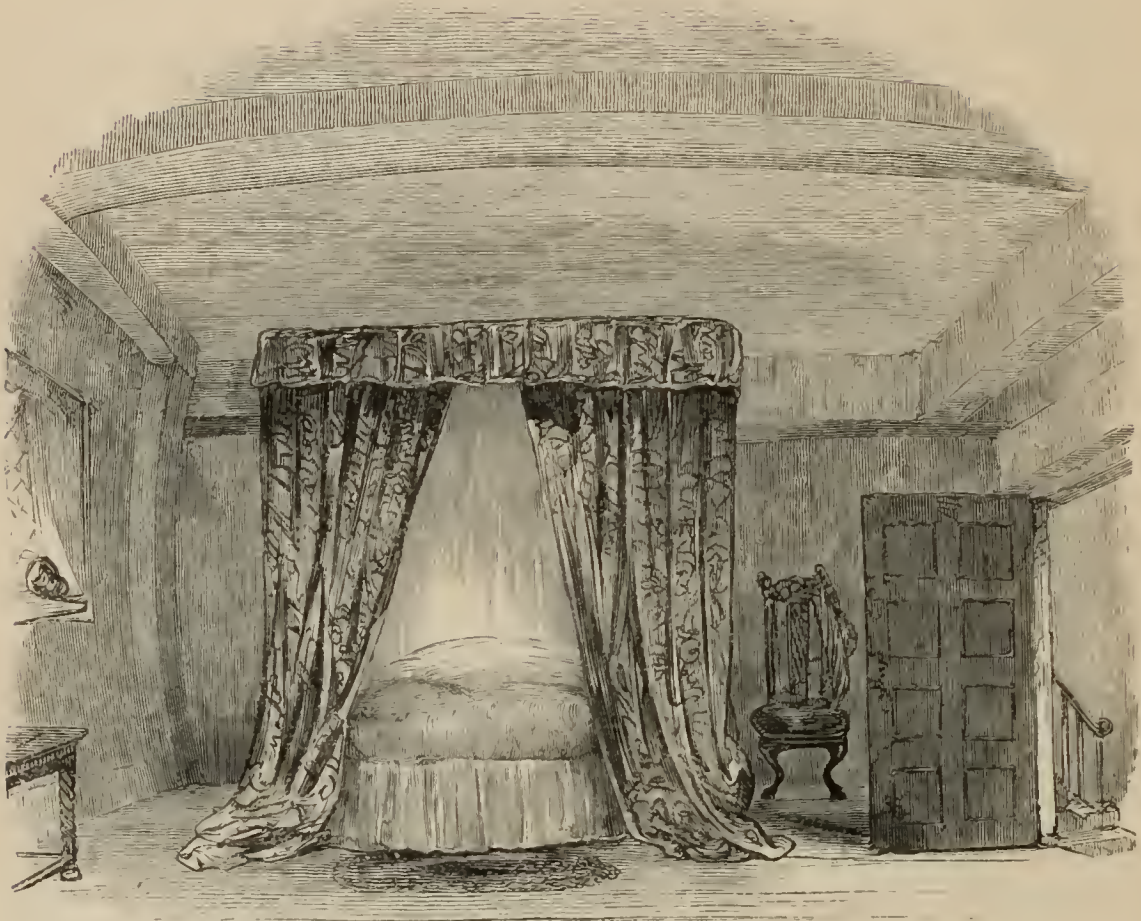


Inn Yard, Southwell.

Southwell, and once with his Queen. The particulars of King Charles's escape, concerted by Hudson, and the stages of travel from Oxford to the surrender to the Scotch Commissioners, northward, are detailed in Peck's "*Desiderata Curiosa*," where so much as regards the residence at Southwell may be procured, with several interesting pages of the examination of Dr. Hudson before the Parliament. The French agent, or envoy, Montreuil, who appears to have had the interest of the sovereign sincerely at heart in the dealings with the sturdy Presbyterians, seems to have been lodging with his attendants, at the tavern in Southwell, when Charles entered the town, and

it is probable they quartered there together. The inn where he lodged, and his small and humble bed-chamber, are shown. The inn is notable, and situated in the central street. The town had its direful experience of the ravages of war. Here the garrison of Newark once, in a sally, cut to pieces nearly the entire regiment of the Parliamentary soldiers. There is a legend which relates, that "when King Charles was in his worst shifts, he lodged himself in the town of Southwell, and being ill shod, as many of his people were at the same time, he sallied out in the dusk of evening to find a cordwainer who might furnish shoes for him speedily. He entered the shop of one Lee, a fanatical shoemaker, who was just then in silence receiving the showers of grace in drowsy meditation. At the first glance of his customer he augured well; but upon taking the foot into his swarthy hands, he refused to proceed with the accustomed measurement. "Last night," he said, "gathering me to sleep with a goodly hymn, I had a dream. The Lord talks in dreams. One, attired in cloak and plumed hat, even to your own figure, came to me, and did as you do now, placing his foot upon my knee; and a warning was given to me, that he who worked for that man should never thrive! Let us part, my friend; I had as lief work for Sathanas himself as for the bringer of sorrow to my threshold." "The forlorn monarch," says an historian, "whose misfortunes had opened his mind to the impressions of superstition, uttered an ejaculation expressive of his resignation to the will of Providence, and returned to the palace, which was then his place of abode." At the *Inn* here illustrated he surrendered himself (privately), in the panelled room, to the Scotch Commissioners. Their after baseness is too well understood to require a single observation. A little before the King's death, the apartment was used by Cromwell himself, when he went to oppose the northern army.

Connected with this period is the body, or rather skeleton, of a soldier, found upright in a vault at the palace, 1740. The boots and spurs were there; an axe was by the side of them. Tradition says that a deserter of the Parliamentary troop was here summarily punished, upon his apprehension and condemnation. "On the 17th March, 1717," says an authority (Peck), "as a sexton was digging Mr. Andrews' grave in the south side of the Minster, he with his spade broke off the end of a stone coffin: seeing it hollow, he put in a measuring-rod, and found it larger by a foot than the usual length of a grave. (Who could expect different from a grave-digger?) Opening it, he found the body of a man, lying in his boots: the leather was fresh, and to all appearance sound, till on trial it tore like brown paper: the stitches were plainly to be seen; the shape of the boot toe was made to the foot. He was dressed in a



Charles' Chamber, Southwell.

cloth of tissue, which plainly showed the tissue by waving it against the sun or a candle. A wand lay by him: on his breast lay something like the cover of a cup, of octangular outline; it had something like an acorn with leaves round it on the top, but the concave was uppermost. By letting the mould fall on the face they could make no farther discovery of his head, only the bone was very small and thin, even transparent. The teeth were sound, and were purloined by the spectators. It was supposed to be one of the Cauz family, and possibly he was a cleric.

The site of Southwell (called Sewell or Suelle) is divided into the Burgage (*vulgo*, Burridge), that part of the town from the market-place to the river Greet, and the Prebendary and Church. In ancient times, as at present, this town was swarming with clerics. There was great resort of pilgrims to the four miraculous wells of healing power, near the church and town. There was *Lord's Well*, half a mile S. E. of Southwell; *Holy Well*, near the cloister; and *Catherine's Well*, at Westhorp, for rheumatic people: *Lady's Well* was within the consecrated ground of the church. A. D. 1764, Parson Fowler,

says the record, fell into this well and was drowned; and the sanctity of the water having evaporated, the pit was covered over. We tarried to hear the chanting of the morning services by the superb voices of the choir, which are lauded by every visitor who has time and taste to hear good church music well performed; and then took advantage of the coach which drew near, to ride through Halloughton, Shurgaton, Gonalston, Bullcote, Burton-Joyce, and Carlton, into the merry town of Nottingham. "All this while, (I fancy I hear the reader say,) and you a ballad-monger! — and not one word, much to the purpose, about the Sherwood thieves of old, and their brave leader 'Bold Robin Hood!'" We admire the ballad history of Robin Hood every where — in parlour, in cottage, in elderly type or new, but we have opinions of our own about the hero of the romance. We are shown the Fitz'ooth pedigree; and it is proved there was a vagabond stripling of the Huntingdon family, who broke loose from decent society, and made scales of justice after his own fashion. We do not deny the legend or the pedigree, but that which we in our own quiet senses believe is, that in the first instance no definite hero was intended, so much as a personification of the persecution to which the free-born Saxon race were subjected by their villanous Norman conquerors, and as manifested to an outlaw, fighting daily for revenge and liberty. Hear what Thierry says, after relating the sufferings of Saxon families at the hands of the ruthless invaders: "Other chiefs and rich men, who could not cross the sea, or would not, retired into the forests, — *cum familia sua ad sylvas fugientibus*. (Matthew Paris.) But the wealth of the kingdom was the wealth of the Saxons: if the natives became robbers, it was to recover their own property. *Outlaw* had no disgraceful sense with the subjugated people."

"Merrie and free,
Under the leaves so green,"

sing the minstrels. But alas! there was little merriment or freedom for the originals of those heroes of the harp-string. Many "Little Johns" afterwards may have been; *two* or *three* according to proof. They were of the unadulterated-rogue school. But in my opinion, Robin Hood is the type of undeviating Saxon hatred, waged from night till morning against the minions of the Norman bastard. In those bitter days, in the fen or woodland, father and son stood armed by the hearth-stone at eventide. The veiled women, the chaste girls, the weeping children, knelt upon the weedy floor. Their eyes were turned to heaven in supplication. *The Lord bless and helpe us all!* was the ejaculation at the conclusion of the pious duty. They answered fervently, "Amen!" The weak ones retired to weep and slumber; the strong kept

ward, to listen to the footsteps of the wanderer seeking a home, and to catch the sad echo of the foeman's horn.

Of the older Castle of Nottingham there are but few remains. The *Gateway*, as shown in the illustration, is the chief one. It is well understood by



Gate, Nottingham Castle.

every reader that the castle lately destroyed by fire was an edifice of little warlike frontispiece. Leland says of the old castle: "The bare court is large and metely strong, being beasts and giants over the ditch into the second warde, the frontier of which ward in the entering is exceeding strong with portcullises. Much part of the west side of this inner ward, as the hall and other things, be in ruins. The east side is strong and well tower'd; so is the south side. But the most beautiful and gallant building for a lodging is on the north side, where Edward IV. began a right sumptuous piece of stone work, of which he clearly finished an excellent good tower of three heights of building, and brought up

the other part likewise from the foundation with stone and marvellous fair compassed windows, to the laying of the first soil for chambers." The succeeding illustration is "*Mortimer's Hole*," the historical reference to which



Mortimer's Hole.

is at the fingers' ends of every little schoolboy: (*vide temp. Ed. III.*) This passage through the sand-rock was provided with no less than six gates, besides one to the left hand. The distances were—from 1st to 2d, 48 feet; from 2d to 3d, 42 feet; from 3d to 4th, 45 feet. 159 feet afterwards was the 5th gate: 27 feet lower was the last gate, now closed up, which opened into the Rock Yard. The whole length of this once well-secured passage was 321 feet. It measures 7 feet high, and 6 wide, with slips and loopholes in the rock. The right entrance was discovered by a Mr. Stretton. Of this well-known rock and its history we can only offer the slender illustrations to this portion of our "*Wanderings*." The life of "*Colonel General Hutchinson*" will afford much interest to those who would connect the towers of Nottingham with an important period of our constitutional development. There are fine antique buildings in the town. We



Old House, Nottingham.

merely sketched an ancient house in the upper part of it, which will easily be recognised by an inhabitant. During our stay we enjoyed a pleasant afternoon by the margin of the Trent, and visited Wilford and Clifton churches. This vicinity is rendered interesting to all kind souls who sympathise with the memory of Henry Kirke White. Peace be to him! We heard some sad remembrances of his declining days from the old man who was our feeble guide. We could not fail, with a sad sentiment, to remind ourselves of his "Lines written in Wilford Churchyard, on recovery from sickness:" one, alas! of those deceitful recoveries belonging to the insidious malady which at length drew the frail fabric into the depths of an early tomb:—

" Here would I wish to sleep. This is the spot
Which I have long marked out to lay my bones in:
Tired out and wearied with the riotous world,
Beneath this yew I would be sepulchred.
It is a lovely spot! The sultry sun,
From his meridian height, endeavours vainly
To pierce the shadowy foliage; while the zephyr
Comes wafting gently o'er the rippling Trent,
And plays upon my cheek."

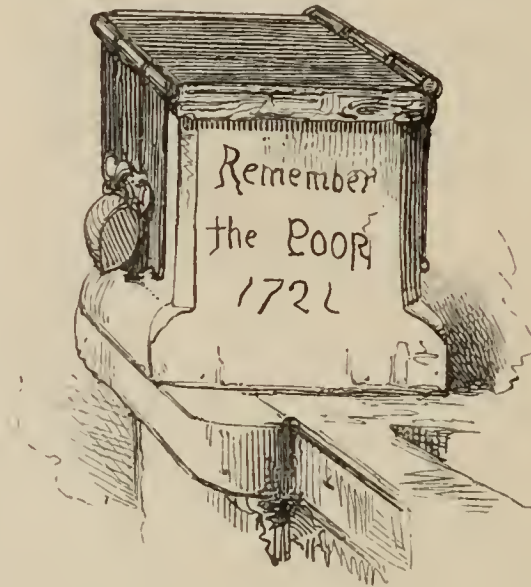
Wilford Church has a low tower, with three bells, attached to a nave. The chancel and side aisles in connection with it, are neat



Wilford Church Font.

and symmetrical. The Font is peculiar. There is one canopied stall, near to the communion rails on the south side: this is pinnacled over a cinquefoil arch. There is one monument with heraldry—"the helmet supporting an oak tree"—to John Woods, a rector of the parish. In Wilford churchyard lie the ashes of Captain John Deane, commander of a vessel called the "Nottingham Galley," in 1710. He sailed from London for Boston on the 25th of September in that year; and when in sight of New England (11th of December), was discomfited by fogs and foul weather. The ship was driven about, and, in spite of all efforts made by the crew, struck at last upon the rock called Boone Island, seven leagues eastward from the mouth of Piscataqua river. They were not recovered from this horrible situation until the 4th of January. So intense was their hunger that they were compelled to "use up" the carpenter, who died, and live upon rations from his carcase. The captain was subsequently his Majesty's consul for the ports of Flanders; and when residing at Ostend, he published his narrative, an early copy of which had been partially distributed in 1711. My own copy is dated 1738. I received it with some MSS., the bequest of my grandfather, who was related to John Deane by marriage.

Clifton is celebrated by the youthful minstrel, in lines of great feeling and melody. It was his favourite resort. The whole scene—from the alabaster rock upon which the hall stands, to the wide stream—is a gem of nature. Many years ago, a young lady, called the “Clifton Beauty,” was hurled into the river from this precipice, and barbarously murdered, by her unfeeling seducer. Kirke White has altered this legend in his poem of Clifton Grove; but, after his lengthened strain, it is needless to prolong the story here. In *Clifton Church* are some instructive effigies of the Cliftons; and there are some sepulchral brasses of an early period. Near to the entrance is a slab to the memory of “Joseph, a negro, called the ‘Black Prince,’ who was converted to Christianity in 1695, and educated in the Clifton family.” His stature (seven feet) is marked upon the church door. The iron-bound *alms-box* is worthy of notice,—it is so rude



Clifton Poor-Box.

and so cautiously constructed. It reminded us forcibly of that passage in the “Chronicles of Jocelyn of Brahelond,” from the Camden press. “Nevertheless, some of our brethren said that Warin, our monk, the keeper of the shrine (St. Edmund’s), together with Sampson the subsacrist, had by concert between themselves pilfered some portion of the offerings to the shrine, in order that they might disburse the same for the necessary purposes of the building of the church, &c. . . . And these before-named two men, in order to remove from themselves suspicion of such a favourable theft, made a certain hollow trunk, with a hole in it at the middle, or at the top, and fastened with an iron lock. This they caused to be set up in the great church, near the door, without the choir, in the way of the people, so that

therein persons should put their contributions for the building of the tower." In Thoroton's County History it is stated that in the hands of Cavendish Neville, Esq. was a MS. — "An Account of the Charges of the Wedding Clothes and Dinner of Sir Jervase Clifton, and Mary, Daughter of Sir John Neville, who were married 17 January, 1530." One item bears upon the text of Shakspeare, in *Hamlet*, which has given rise to some ridiculous imaginations. It is the "hawk and handsaw" passage of commentators.

Item. Cranes—every crane, 3s. 4d. - - 01 06 08

Item. 16 *Hearonsews*—every one, 12d. - 00 16 00

from "Heronceaux" (*French*), young herons.

At the time of year we loitered together in Clifton churchyard, treading through the long grass and the spreading weeds, from dwelling to dwelling of the listless dead, there was every inducement to refresh the eye and the heart with the luxuriant scenes of nature, and to drink a refreshment in the fitful breeze, in the wayward bending of the perfumed elder boughs, and in the blended harmonies of stream, and bird-music, and the low chaunt of the matron over her slumbering infant, at the humble and time-worn threshold of the woodbined cottage upon the verge of the lonesome highway. From the sympathy which is matured by true fellowship, we two, who had rubbed along strange paths shoulder by shoulder together, alternately partaking in the burden of our simple store, had learnt to think together, and usually to apprehend the same thought, as moved by the same unprepared circumstance; and on this occasion especially we gave way to the throng of external joys, and basked together by the mounds of those whose brave histories and unadulterated facetiæ we willingly would have chronicled, unmindful of the wearied guide, the jaded horse, and the evening changes in the sultry western sky. At once we fixed our observation upon a delicate, pale child, who, with his plunder of osier wands and sedges from the flood, sat upon the style near to the porch of the sacred dwelling, and seemed lost to all other excitement or vision excepting the slender form of a beautiful warbler, who, shifting from bough to bough, "like the bird in the story," poured forth his interrupted songs, undisturbed by the presence of that romantic child. One could have believed they held communion with each other; the one was so contemplative and sad; the other so expressive, so loud, and so emphatic of untaught melody. We were upon ground hallowed by the shadow of the minstrel of many hearts—the amiable Kirke White! and the thought came over me to interpret the dialogue in my own unpretending way.

The Child and the Song Bird.

CHILD. — Happy bird in the linden tree !

Bright is the gold on your beautiful wing ;
 By the gurgling brook, come, play with me,
 And sing me the strain you often sing.
 Light are the buds of the bending tree ;
 The stream, the moon, and the evening star,
 And May-day carols, are dear to me ;
 But your sweet voice is lovelier far !
 I have read my ballad of wondrous deeds,
 I have thrown aside the faëry book ;
 Come, play with me by the whispering reeds,
 That shelter the shore of our shining brook !

BIRD. — Pretty child ! I would rove with you

By the gurgling brook you love to hear,
 From the dawn, that brightens the silvery dew,
 Till the moon and the little blue stars appear ;
 But here aloft, in my linden tree,
 Where woodbine clusters round the stem,
 Are four pretty forms most dear to me ;
 My heart and my songs are all for them !
 I may fall where the leaves of the autumn lie,
 I may welcome the smile of the merry new year ;
 I can only worship, and sing, and die ;
 Such is my slender duty here !

CHILD. — Pretty bird on the linden tree !

Would that mine were those beautiful wings,
 That I could flutter aloft, and see
 The sparkling eyes of those innocent things !
 Do you know that an old man yesterday
 Call'd me a "poor little orphan child ?"
 (We often meet in the sheltered way,
 Where the star flowers grow, and the weeds run wild.)
 He welcomed me with a merrier word,
 Wandering here by the woodland dell,
 For he call'd me a "sweet little playful bird !"
 Am *I* like the forms you love so well ?

BIRD. — Pretty child ! *you* are lovelier far

Than birds, or flowers, or bending trees,—
 Than sun, and moon, and evening star,
 And all that the glance of Nature sees.
 Every thing must fade away,
 Flowers and leaves must droop and fall,
 But your little soul shall dwell for aye
 With the Holy Spirit, who made them all !
 Hark ! for I hear the matron nigh,
 Hailing thee home to her friendly door,
 And the sun is bright in the western sky :
 Hence ! hence ! — I never was sad before.

This was the last day of our pilgrimage in quest of the records of good old times. We spent it cheerfully with a generous host, who unexpectedly claimed us for his own immediately upon our return to Nottingham. Upon the Sunday evening, after a tranquil retrospect of scenes and actions, and vicissitudes of the past, we arranged our compact necessaries for homeward flight, and the evening of the next day found us listening to the mad prattling of our excited juvenile companions. We have no apology to make for any thing in this form which may be accused of haste and incompleteness. It is what it professes to be—a “Wandering.”

Should these pages induce some bilious book-worm, or gentle studious invalid, to desert the library for the mountain, or the solemn abbeys of his “Monasticon” for the green quiet places where the originals hasten to decay, the purpose will be answered; their tongues will be loosened, and their pencils will be worn for public benefit;—and may they have more leisure than we at present can find for the arrangement and better ordering of our scattered manuscript.

“Woe’s me, that all my simple lore
Has been unfit to rescue more,
And that my guideless, rustic skill
Has told the ancient tales so ill.”



INDEX.

- ALVECOTE Priory, 88.
Ancient British pillars, Wolverhampton, 13.
Anker River, 87.
Annington, 85.
Ashford, 319.
Avon River, 278.
- Bablick Ferry, 163.
Bakewell, 319.
Bayard and his colts, 65.
Bear and Ragged Staff, at Cumnor, 157.
Bentley Hall, 5.
Berklands, 354.
Bescott Hall, 69.
Bilston, 27.
Bilston dialect, 29.
Black Cross of Abingdon, 161.
Black Ladies' Convent, 48.
Blade of venison, 281.
Blowing stone, 270.
Boscobel House, 37.
Bosworth Field, 119.
Breadsall, 309.
Brightwell Baldwin, 243.
Breewood, 47.
Burdett's legend, 89.
- Cadeby, 115.
Calne, 278.
Cannock Chase, 295.
Cassington, 193.
Castleton, 323.
Charles I. Escape from Hopton, 10. At
Southwell, 365.
Charles II. Escape at Boscobel, 38.
Charlton Park, 271.
Chaucer's grand-daughter, 245.
Chillington Hall, 52.
Chippenham, 275.
Clifford, Rosamond, 224. †
Clifton, 372.
Clipstone, 352.
Codsall, 35.
Coles-pits at Coxwell, 260.
Cumnor, 141.
Cumnor Hall, 143.
Cumnor Church, 153.
Cuxham, 243.
- Dale Hermitage, 314.
Dale Church, 316.
Danes defeated at Tettenhall by Edward the
Elder, 35.
- Darlaston, 62.
De la Pole family, 244.
Dixie family, 126.
Dragon Hill, 264.
Dudley, 18.
Dudley Caverns, 20.
Dudley Castle, 22.
Dudley Priory, 23.
Dudley Geological Museum, 58.
Dudley family, 302.
Duke of Suffolk's execution, 246.
- Edwinstowe, 360.
Ensham, 187.
Ewelme, 244.
- Fair Rosamond, 215.
Farringdon, 259.
Fluor spar of the Peak, 326.
Forest Hill, 235.
Font in Bosworth Church, 127.
Forster's tomb in Cumnor, 155.
- Giffard family of Chillington, 53.
Godstowe Nunnery, 210.
Grendon, 132.
Guy, Thomas, 81.
Gypsy tomb at Calne, 280.
- Haddington, 231.
Harcourt family, 173.
Hardwicke Hall, 343.
Hincksey, 289.
Hollingshed, the historian, 104.
Holton Church, 236.
Hobbes of Malmesbury, 348.
Horspath, 287.
- Ickleton Way, 265.
Iffley, 288.
Isis River, 163.
- Johnson's, Dr., tree at Lichfield, 296.
- Kemble, John, educated at Sedgley, 57.
King John's palace at Clipstone, 353.
Kingston Lisle, 269.
- Lane family, of Bentley, 6.
Lane's Chancel, Wolverhampton, 10.
Lacock Abbey, 276.
Lead mines in the Peak, 325.
Legend of Pooley Hall, 93.

- Legend of the Devil's Quoits, 180.
 Lichfield, 296.
 Lichfield Grammar School, 299.
 Lime caverns at Linley, 301.
 Litton, 319.
 Little Coxwell, 260.
 Long Birch, 54.
 Longstone, 319.
 Love tale, 253.
- Malmesbury Abbey, 271.
 Mam Tor, 328.
 Mansfield, 350.
 Market Bosworth Grammar School, 114.
 Marmon family, 78.
 Mary Queen of Scots at Hardwicke, 346.
 Merivale, 132.
 Mickle, W. J., 234.
 Mickle's ballad of Cumnor Hall, 148.
 Miller of Mansfield, 350.
 Milton at Forest Hill, 232.
 Morley, 310.
 Mortimer's Hole, at Nottingham, 369.
 Mosley Hall, 56.
 Mosely's gift to Walsall, 68.
- North Hincsey, 290.
 Nottingham, 368.
- Oak, early encouragement of its culture, 356.
 Oak, the Shamble, 358.
 Oak, the Greendale, 359.
 Oak, the Parliament, 361.
 Odin Mine, in the Peak, 328.
 Old Star and Garter, Wolverhampton, 15.
 Oldborough Castle, 278.
 Ollerton, 362.
 Orton-on-the-Hill, 113.
 Oxford, 285.
- Park Farm, view from, 62.
 Paul, William, of Orton, 113.
 Penderell family, 41.
 Peverill of the Peak, 323.
 Polesworth, 99.
 Polesworth Hall, 100.
 Polesworth Nunnery, 101.
 Pooley Hall, 90.
 Pooley Chapel, 93.
 Pope's Chamber, at Harecourt, 168.
 Portland's, duke of, Demesne at Clipstone, 352.
 Pouck Hill, 7.
 Pretender's house at Derby, 307.
- Queen Catherine Parr, 249.
- Radcliffe, Dr., 206.
 Rhyme of the Mournful Lady, 93.
 Rhyme of the Vale of the White Horse, 266.
 Richard III., funeral of, 125.
 Robin Hood and his story, 338.
 Robsart, Amy, her true story, 144.
 Rufford Park, 362.
 Rushall Castle, 300.
- St. Chad's Cathedral, at Birmingham, 302.
- St. Chad's reliques, 302.
 St. Chad's Well, 297.
 St. Bartholomew's Hospital, at Oxford, 285.
 St. Giles's, Oxford, 230.
 Seckington Fort, 107.
 Sedgley, White Lion at, 21.
 Sedgley Park School, 57.
 Shereton Church, 128.
 Shenton Hall, 129.
 Sherwood Forest, 355.
 Sherbourne Castle, 249.
 Shire Oak, 295.
 Shuttington Church, 109.
 Shotover, 286.
 Simpson, the mathematician, 117.
 Southwell, 362. A palace of Wolsey's, 363.
 Spencers of Yarnton, 201.
 Stanton Harecourt, 164.
 Stanton Church, 170.
 Stanton Kitchen, 165.
 Stowe Pool, 297.
 Sutton Cheney Church, 115.
- Tamworth, 72.
 Tamworth Church, 74.
 Tamworth, remarkable crypt of, 75.
 Tamworth Castle, 77.
 Tetsworth, 238.
 Tettenhall, 33.
 The Brill Hunting Grounds, 237.
 The Manger, 265.
 Peak Caverns, 326.
 The pedlar of Lob Lane, 251.
 The Ridgeway, 264.
 Tideswell, 320.
 Tideswell, remarkable tomb, 321.
 Tub Castle of a modern Diogenes, 262.
 Turton's Hall, 9.
- Uffingdon Hills, 262.
 Uffingdon Castle, 263.
 Union Poor House, 135.
 Unton Chapel, at Farringdon, 250.
- Walsall, 64.
 Walsall, ancient records at, 66.
 Watlington, 248.
 Wayland Smith's Cave, 264.
 Wells at Southwell, 366.
 Wells, David, MSS. of, 132.
 Welbeck Park, 359.
 Wheatley, 237.
 White Horse Hill, 263.
 White Ladies, 45.
 Whitsun games at Ensham, 188.
 Wilford, 370.
 Winifred White's cure, 46.
 Witham, 228.
 Wolvercote, 209.
 Wolverhampton, 9.
 Wolverhampton Collegiate Church, 10.
 Worksop, 360.
 Wren's Nest Hills, 20.
- Yarnton, 198.
 Yarnton Manor, 202.

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